

ANDREA VS TOWN OF DARKNESS

WRITTEN BY

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FADE IN:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

THREE BOYS (8,9, 10) stand in a loose circle around ANDREA REFUGE (8, long blonde hair, glowing grey eyes). They snicker, pointing at her.

BOY
(sneers)
She has no friends.

BOY TWO
(jeering)
Where is she from?

BOY THREE
(smirks)
Look at her. So weird. Like, what even is she?

Andrea stands still, lowering her head. Sadness flickers in her eyes, but her fists clench behind her back, trembling with tension. The boys keep jeering.

ANDREA (V.O.)
Why do they always make fun of me?

She breathes in deeply, then suddenly ...

EXT. PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS

THUD! The three boys lie sprawled in the mud, faces bruised, groaning in pain. Blood trickles from their noses and lips.

Andrea has two shadows. One is of her on one side, but on the other side, there is a shadow of her with red eyes. Blink, and that shadow is gone.

Andrea is confused. She looks around.

ANDREA
It-it wasn't me, I don't think. I mean, maybe it was.

BOY
(whimpering)
Sorry - for bullying you. Please - just leave us alone.

Andrea stands above them, breathing heavily, her fist still clenched. She doesn't smile. She doesn't speak. She stares down at them with calm intensity. A TEACHER grabs her.

ANDREA
 (to teacher)
 I don't like being provoked. I was only defending myself.

EXT. PHOTO STUDIO - ESTABLISHING - DAY

SUPER: BOULDER, COLORADO - PRESENT DAY

ANDREA (V.O.)
 Every family wants to act normal like they've figured it out.

INT. PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

A busy, old-fashioned PHOTO STUDIO, bustling with families. Kids laughing, cameras flashing. Inside, ANDREA REFUGE (16), with a shadow that has red eyes, if the audience blinks, it's gone, stands beside her brother, JACK REFUGE (12, short black hair and hazel eyes that gleam in the sunlight).

The family is posed, somewhat stiff. JACK nudges Andrea in the ribs.

JACK
 I'm not touching you, 'Drea.

ANDREA
 (playfully)
 The hand that touched boogers?

She shoves Jack lightly. Jack sways with exaggerated flair, holding his side like she wounded him.

PAPA REFUGE (70, Italian, grizzled, with a slight limp, speaks in a low, hushed tone) watches them from behind, his brow furrowed.

PAPA
 Alright, you two. Knock it off.

Papa has a green fedora tattoo on his arm.

Andrea stands in shock as Jack holds his side like she wounded him. Papa's brow is furled.

ANDREA
 He started it, Papa.

JACK
(shrugs)
She didn't have to shove me.

MAMA REFUGE (50, blonde, Italian, with a mix of kindness and sternness) pats Andrea on the shoulder, giving her a soft but warning look.

MAMA
Please, Andrea and Jack, let's
behave. We want to send something
nice to the relatives.

Andrea nods, her eyes softening.

MAMA (CONT'D)
You know how hard it is for them to
approve anything, considering, you
know, the age difference between
your Papa and me.

FLASH - Like a dream, Andrea watches her Mama, Papa, and Jack from afar.

ANDREA (V.O.)
Plus, the fact that I'm not even
your real daughter, you found me.

SNAP - Andrea is standing next to Jack, Papa, and Mama.

Andrea glances at Jack. He sticks his tongue out playfully, then grins. Andrea rolls her eyes.

ZING - Andrea is watching her Mama, Papa, and Jack from afar.

ANDREA (V.O.)
I'm sorry, Mama, Papa, Jack - we're
supposed to look happy.

The family in front of them finishes up and walks off. The PHOTOGRAPHER waves them forward.

PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S.)
Next in line, please!

From a distance, Andrea dashes forward enthusiastically.

PAPA
Wait your turn, Andrea.

Jack runs up beside her, wiggling his fingers like claws.

JACK
(grinning)
Manners, just like Papa said.

Andrea grabs a PLASTIC WAND off the nearby prop table and brandishes it like a sword.

ANDREA
(playfully)
Stay back, you monster!

Jack holds his hand out, lurching forward like a zombie.

JACK
Yes, master - I obey.

Papa watches, limping closer, shaking his head with amusement.

PAPA
I don't need to fall and not get
back up because of you two.

Mama sighs, her arms crossed, watching the scene unfold.

MAMA
Andrea, keep an eye on your
brother. You know how he gets.

Andrea lowers her "sword," giving a mock salute.

ANDREA
I'll always keep an eye on him,
Mama.

Mama gives her a small, approving smile.

MAMA
That's a good sister.

She leans in and kisses Andrea on the cheek. Andrea makes a face and wipes it off.

ANDREA
Yuck!

The Photographer snaps his fingers impatiently, motioning for them to line up. The Refuge family arranges themselves. Andrea and Jack are in the front, and Mama and Papa in the back. They force smiles.

PHOTOGRAPHER
(flatly)
Pretend you're a happy family.

Click. The camera captures the moment.

ANDREA (V.O.)
Everyone knows that photographs
lie.

Click. The Camera captures Andrea on top of Jack, who has a dark shadow bleeding out of him and Mama and Papa trying to remove her.

ANDREA (V.O.)
We're not perfect - but we love
each other.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

A RED CAR pulls up to a rundown apartment building. The car's door creaks as Papa steps out slowly, favoring his bad leg. Mama gets out on the other side.

MAMA
Help your Papa up the stairs, Jack.

JACK
(immediately)
Yes, Mama.

Andrea rolls her eyes but follows.

ANDREA
(grumbling)
Fine.

MAMA
What was that, Andrea?

Papa waves them off with a gruff chuckle.

PAPA
I'm fine. I'm not that unstable.
Yet.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Everything slowly comes into view, like a hazy dream. The apartment is small and cramped. A stove hums in the corner next to an old bed. PAPA is at the stove, stirring a pot of stew. Jack darts past him, almost knocking into him.

ANDREA (V.O.)

This is how I remember everything
going down before seeking my home
universe.

Jack laughs but suddenly freezes. His eyes dart to the walls,
which seem to squirm. GIANT COCKROACHES, SPIDERS, and
EARTHWORMS crawl everywhere, grotesque and crawling toward
Papa.

PAPA

This place can go up in flames if
we're not careful.

JACK

(alarmed)

Don't the giant bugs bother you?

Andrea bursts into the room, eyes wide at seeing the massive
insects. Without hesitating, she grabs a KNIFE from the
counter and swings at the bugs.

ANDREA

Get back, you fifthly things.

PAPA

(wincing)

Careful! I don't want to spill the
stew-

He ducks just in time as Andrea's knife narrowly misses his
head, instead lodging into a cockroach. SPLAT! Green goo
bursts out, splattering onto Mama, who sighs in exasperation.

MAMA

(wiping herself off)

Andrea, dear, we're having your
Papa's favorite meal tonight. It's
his birthday, remember?

PAPA

(mumbles)

Damn, you, Andrea.

ANDREA

That's right.

MAMA

It's a celebration. And the bugs -
well, they add flavor.

Andrea pulls the knife from the insect with a grimace.

PAPA
I hope it still tastes good.

Mama wipes her fingers on the cockroaches and licks them.
Andrea pulls the knife from the insect with a grimace.
Mama licks her finger where the green blood hits her.

MAMA
(smiling)
This one tastes like honey. It'll
be fine.

Papa snorts, stirring the pot again.

PAPA
I hope it still tastes good with
all the extra protein.

Andrea gives the bugs a wary glance but taps her knife in the
pot and tastes the broth.

ANDREA
(tentative)
Still - it tastes good, Papa. I
guess we'll have to - wipe out the
rest somewhere else.

MAMA
Bugs are good for protein, you
know.

Papa waves them away, his patience thinning.

PAPA
Enough of this. Out! Out! I need to
finish prepping for tonight!

Jack races out, but Andrea lingers by the door, looking over
her shoulder at Papa.

ANDREA
(softly)
What if - what if you're not here
when we come back?

Papa looks up from his cooking, meeting her gaze.

PAPA
(smiling)
We'll always be here, Andrea. This
is our home, and this is your home.
We are not going anywhere.

MAMA
 (nodding)
 That's right. We won't disappear.

As MAMA says this, she begins to fade from existence. Andrea snaps her fingers. Everything is frozen except for her.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Andrea, Jack, Mama, and Papa are sitting around a table.

PAPA
 (sigh/holds Mama's hand)
 It's high time I told you about the bugs.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - FLASHBACK

Snow falls thick and fast. The wind HOWLS as CARSON SMITH (45, heavy blue jacket, brown pants, green fedora) and Papa (45) stand on a steep mountain. They pull ice picks from their backpacks and hammer them into the frozen ground. The CRACK of ice is heard beneath their strikes.

PAPA (V.O.)
 I was an explorer. That's Carson.

Suddenly, the ice beneath Papa (45) and Carson (45) shatters—CRACK, CRACK—splintering in every direction. A bolt of electricity WHOOSHES from the ground, followed by a loud RUMBLE. KABOOM! Electric currents shoot in all directions, and Papa and Carson are suspended in the air.

PAPA (V.O.)
 We opened a gateway to another world.

Their eyes widen as dark creatures crawl through the rift. One of them is carrying a baby.

INT. LABORATORY - FLASHBACK

Dim lighting and unsettling shadows move across the walls. A long, dark tentacle slithers past Papa, narrowly missing him.

PAPA
 That was way too close.

CARSON

If we can figure out what this is,
we might find a cure for all the
world's diseases.

Papa sees the child over at another table.

PAPA

Even if you do, what stops them
from taking over everything?

CARSON

They won't. Relax.

The tentacles writhe ominously in the background.

PAPA

Mama and I can't have kids. I'll
name this one Andrea. It means
bravery, and she will have a good
path forward.

CARSON

The portal is still open.

PAPA

I'll take Andrea back one day to
show her where she's from.

END FLASHBACK

INT. KITCHEN - PRESENT

Papa and Mama are holding hands at the table. Andrea and Jack
seated around.

PAPA

The Sentinels, these dark creatures
that come through, are dangerous.
They want to combine our worlds and
hurt you and Jack.

ANDREA

(proud)

I'm not frightened. I can handle
it.

EXT. APARTMENT PORCH - DAY

JACK opens the door and steps out onto the porch. In the
distance, a ROAR echoes through the city.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Papa, Mama, and Jack sit around a table—bowls of soup before them. The mood is tense.

PAPA
Have you taken your medicine yet,
Andrea?

Andrea shakes her head.

ANDREA
I don't need it.

MAMA
Honey, you know I don't like that
stuff either. But it helps you see
things clearer.

PAPA
(slams fist)
Without your medication, you become
violent. Not a loving person, you
want to kill, you don't think
straight, take the damn medication.

Andrea looks at them both, then stands abruptly.

ANDREA
I'm fine. I want to go outside.
Jack and I have a world to save.

She darts out of the room. Jack follows quickly behind.

Mama and Papa exchange a weary look.

PAPA
That girl is gonna put me in an
early grave.

MAMA
We will make sure that doesn't
happen.

EXT. APARTMENT STAIRWAY - DAY

Andrea climbs the stairs, a long stick in hand. The stairs are infested with bugs. WHACK. She swats a bug off the railing, SPLAT. Jack leaps past her, bounding up the stairs with excitement.

JACK
'Drea, wait for me!

ANDREA
These bugs are everywhere!

JACK
I bet you can't catch me!

ANDREA
Jack! Slow down!

Jack laughs, speeding up. Andrea, determined, picks up the pace.

Mama and Papa step outside just in time to see Andrea chasing Jack down the street.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Andrea is running full speed through an open field. She's determined to catch Jack.

ANDREA
I'm coming for you, Jack!

Suddenly, a small bee lands on her arm. She pauses, staring at it curiously. Another bee lands on her hand, then one on her leg.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
What's going on?

More bees land on her as if drawn to her energy. The buzz of wings fills the air. A GIANT BEE descends before her, and she freezes, eyes wide—her heart pounds.

GIANT BEE
Do not be afraid.

Andrea's breath catches. She trembles slightly.

ANDREA
What do you want?

The Giant Bee hovers in the air, its wings flapping silently.

GIANT BEE
I've seen the destruction that the portal has caused. I cannot bear to watch another world fall. I offer you a refuge. Take my help, child.

Andrea steps back, but the bees surround her, holding her in place. She shakes her head, unsettled.

ANDREA
 (rubs eyes in disbelief)
 Why does anyone want to help me?

The Giant Bee lowers itself, almost bowing before her.

GIANT BEE
 When the sentinels come, seek me
 out. It will be the only way to
 save your world. Save yourself.

JACK'S VOICE echoes from across the park.

JACK (O.S.)
 'Drea, where are you? You're
 supposed to be chasing me!

The bees suddenly scatter, flying off of her. Andrea spins around to find Jack waving at her from a distance. She looks back, but the Giant Bee has vanished.

She takes off running toward Jack but accidentally bumps into Papa.

PAPA
 Andrea, there's been an emergency.
 We have to leave.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

The family — Papa, Mama, Andrea, and Jack — is wearing their Sunday best. A lightning bolt strikes in the distance, casting a shadow across the mountain.

Andrea waves to the shadow.

JACK
 Who are you waving at?

ANDREA
 Carson. He's up there, on the
 mountain.

Papa frowns, clearly disturbed.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

The pews are empty except for Papa and Mama. Photos of Carson are spread around. Papa, eyes wet, stares down at the images. Mama sits beside him, her expression cold.

PAPA
He was my best friend.

MAMA
It's for the better.

Papa clenches his fists.

PAPA
I could've kept both of you in my
life.

MAMA
After what he did? After what she
saw?

PAPA
He made a mistake.

MAMA
His mistake got him killed.

PAPA
It wasn't on purpose. He just got
reckless.

INT. CATHEDRAL OFFICE - DAY

Papa, Mama, Andrea, and Jack stand in a cluttered office, a tense silence lingering in the air. An ANGEL STATUE in the corner suddenly creaks and moves.

ANGEL STATUE
Boo!

Andrea is the only one who jumps back, startled.

PAPA
What the hell?

ANGEL STATUE
I didn't mean to scare you. Carson
wanted to give you his home.

ANDREA
Are you a talking statue?

PAPA
Quiet, Andrea, he's telling us
about Carson.

ANGEL STATUE
On the other side of the Rockies.

Papa's eyes narrow.

PAPA

So, what was Carson was working on?

ANGEL STATUE

Andrea, Carson is alive. He's safe.

PAPA

I've never been that far into Colorado.

ANDREA

That's through the portal. It's too dangerous.

MAMA

We can move. We need a more prominent place.

ANDREA

This can't be real.

INT. BEDROOM - PRESENT

Andrea lies in bed.

ANDREA (V.O.)

That night, everything changed.

Suddenly, BAM! BAM! Gunshots ring out. Andrea bolts upright, heart racing. THUMP, THUMP. She creeps out of bed, her feet touching the cold floor.

Her hands tremble as she reaches for the door.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Andrea peeks into the hallway. Above her, a hatch in the ceiling.

VOICE (O.S.)

Is someone else here?

VOICE TWO (O.S.)

I'll check.

ANDREA

Oh no -

She sees SENTINELS in hazmat suits moving down the hallway toward her.

SENTINEL

There she is. Grab her! They want
her back, dead or alive.

Andrea darts forward, diving between the legs of the Sentinel
and sprinting down the hall.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Andrea bursts into the open air but finds herself trapped in
a dead-end alley. She's cornered, and the sound of footsteps
grows louder. She presses her hands against the brick wall,
searching for an escape.

Suddenly, her fingers find a hidden latch. She pulls it open,
revealing a dark stairway leading up to the attic.

She takes one last look behind her, then darts up the stairs.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

Andrea, shaking, continues up to the stairs, scanning the
room in a panic. Her eyes dart from corner to corner,
desperately seeking a hiding place. Her hand trembles as she
closes the latch with a WHAP. It clicks, locking her in. SHE
HEARS FOOTSTEPS nearby.

SENTINEL (O.S.)

She couldn't have gone far.

SENTINEL TWO (O.S.)

She went to the left.

MAMA (O.S)

Take us instead.

PAPA (O.S.)

We deserve this.

SENTIEL (O.S.)

We will take all three of you. You
two are not enough.

The FOOTSTEPS grow faint, moving away. Andrea exhales, her
breath shaky.

Andrea's eyelids become heavy. She closes her eyes.

VOICE (O.S.)

I told you they would come.

Andrea's EYES open wide, and she spins around, startled.

ANDREA

I'm scared.

A GIANT BEE hovers nearby, its massive wings vibrating softly. Its many eyes glisten in the dim light.

Andrea can hardly keep her eyes open, a dream-like state.

GIANT BEE

You'll be safe here.

Andrea sinks to the floor, curling up in a ball, her body trembling – tears in her eyes. She blinks, and the Giant Bee is gone before slipping in a dark and deep sleep.

FADE OUT

INT. ATTIC - DAY

Andrea wakes up on the hard floor, disoriented. Sunlight filters through the cracks, but she is still hazy.

VOICE (O.S.)

It's been three days since you
grabbed food.

Andrea sits up, surrounded by empty food wrappers. She blinks, and the Giant Bee appears, now hovering closer, smaller bees swarming around it.

ANDREA

I just... I'm not sure those things
are gone.

Andrea swats at a bee buzzing near her face. She catches it mid-air. It buzzes frantically in her hands.

BZZ

Without thinking, she brings the bee closer to her mouth.

CRUNCH.

The Giant Bee watches her almost impassively.

GIANT BEE

You need to check on your brother
and your parents. Find out where
they are.

Andrea stands, moving aimlessly around the attic.

ANDREA
Yeah... I guess.

The Giant Bee's antennae twitch.

GIANT BEE
Plus, you stink.

Andrea sniffs herself and gags.

SNAP - Andrea unlocks the hatch, not noticing that there is no Giant Bee Behind her.

ANDREA
Bye.

Andrea takes a deep breath and steps outside.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Andrea emerges from the hidden latch. There is silence. She turns around to see... nothing. It's just a blank wall. She sighs as the wind whips through the empty lot.

ANDREA
Sigh.

The wind blows faster, and Andrea pulls her coat tighter, walking towards her apartment through blinding snow.

Andrea can barely see the stairs through the snow as JACK, her younger brother, comes barreling down.

JACK
'Drea! You're alive!

Still in a daze, Andrea looks at him. Wind and snow whipping her hair. Andrea shakes her head and wipes her eyes.

ANDREA
Jack?

Jack grabs her in a tight hug.

JACK
Those people... they took Mama and Papa in Hazmat suits. They tied me up. I got loose after a day, but... but they're gone.

Andrea's eyes widen.

ANDREA
You don't think they would...?

JACK
I hope they didn't go through the
portal.

Andrea shakes her head, the weight of everything sinking in.

ANDREA
We need to talk to Carson.

Jack's face falls.

JACK
'Drea, Carson's dead.

Andrea looks away, unsure of what to believe. She looks back quickly to make sure Jack exists.

ANDREA
No. That was a ruse. Papa wanted to
get his house so we'd have more
space.

Jack sniffs, wiping his nose with his sleeve.

JACK
You need a shower first.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The lights are out. Andrea, wrapped in a towel, steps gingerly on police tape stretched across the floor. From the bathroom, the sound of running water echoes. Jack sits on the couch, nervously bouncing his leg.

JACK
How do we even find Carson?

Andrea stands, deep in thought.

ANDREA
Papa mentioned him living in the
mountains. Somewhere remote.

Jack's face drops.

JACK
That's... that's a fifteen-hour
walk.

ANDREA

Then we need to pack. Now.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

A blizzard rages. Snow whips through the air, almost blinding. JACK and ANDREA trudge through the storm, bundled in heavy coats, barely visible against the white landscape.

SUPER: ROCKY MOUNTAINS

They stumble upon the entrance to a dark cave, its mouth vast and ominous.

ANDREA

This has to be it.

Jack, panting, pulls his scarf tighter against the cold.

JACK

You better be right, 'Drea.

ANDREA

(grabs Jack)

Carson is still alive. I can feel it in my bones.

INT. CAVE - DAY

The interior is surprisingly cozy. There's a bed, a small kitchen setup, and framed pictures on the walls. Carson, a rugged man in his 70s, paces back and forth, his eyes wild with energy.

CARSON

The Sentinels... They're from the other side of the portal—Inception Heights.

Andrea looks at the pictures—Carson and Papa, smiling like brothers.

ANDREA

Why take Mama and Papa through the portal?

Carson stops pacing, his eyes narrowing.

CARSON

Your Papa... he captured one of them. One of the creatures. We planned to dissect it.

(MORE)

CARSON (CONT'D)

Learn its secrets. Maybe even find a cure for what's wrong with this world. We would've been rich.

JACK

But it backfired.

Andrea sighs.

ANDREA

Papa hated the apartment. Of course, he wanted more money.

Carson grabs a heavy jacket from a nearby hook and pulls on a fedora.

CARSON

Stay here. I'm going to send the creature back through the portal. It's too dangerous for you.

ANDREA

No. We're coming. We're going to rescue Mama and Papa.

Jack looks at a picture—Mama standing in the background, frowning behind Carson and Papa.

JACK

Mama hated you, Carson.

Carson looks away, guilt flashing across his face.

CARSON

I know. But I'm sending the creature through. I have to.

He pulls a blanket off something... a mass underneath it twitches. A tentacle slithers out.

ANDREA

If something goes wrong, Mama and Papa could die. I won't risk it.

JACK

Yeah, and I'm too young to be left alone.

Carson sighs, shaking his head.

CARSON

If it all goes wrong... someone has to stay alive. We need a resistance.

Andrea steps forward, determined.

ANDREA
I have to see them.

Jack steps up next to her, standing tall.

JACK
We've always had each other's
backs. I'm coming too.

Carson hesitates but eventually nods.

CARSON
Fine. Suit up. We need supplies
first.

EXT. ROCKY MOUNTAINS - DAY

Andrea, Jack, and Carson battle through the wind, each step against the roaring snowstorm—the cold bites at their skin.

ANDREA
Is the portal up here?

Carson points ahead.

Suddenly, a low GROWL echoes through the wind. A massive, GLOWING GREEN TIGER steps into view, its eyes blazing red, foam dripping from its jaws.

CARSON
Stay back—approach with caution.

The Tiger's eyes lock onto Jack, and it LUNGES. Andrea leaps in front, pushing Jack aside.

JACK
'Drea, watch out!

Andrea rolls out of the way as the Tiger swipes at her. It turns its attention to Carson and POUNCES, knocking him towards the cliff's edge. Carson stumbles, teetering on the brink. His feet slip on the ice, and with a final SWAT from the creature, he falls over the edge.

ANDREA
No!

The Tiger turns back towards Jack, growling.

JACK
What do we do?

Andrea grabs Jack's arm, pulling him along.

ANDREA
Run! Run like hell!

They disappear into the storm, the Tiger GROWLING as it gives chase.

Andrea and Jack run into complete darkness. Jack lets go of Andrea.

JACK
Where are we, Andrea?

A bright red light shoots up from the ground.

A bolt of electricity Andrea and Jack. Jack is thrown backward, slamming into an icy crevice – his neck SNAPS with a sickening crack.

Andrea watches in horror as a red portal swallows JACK, pulling him beneath the snow.

The ground cracks beneath them too fast to react. Andrea puts her hand out.

ANDREA
(tears/upset)
Jack? No.

The ground SWALLOWS up, Andrea.

The ground reforms. Snow stops falling. The Tiger runs by, confused as to where Andrea and Jack went.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Andrea plunges into the blue water, her body hitting the surface with a splash. She struggles to stay afloat, gasping for air as her legs kick frantically.

ANDREA
No, no!

From the depths below, a hand suddenly grabs her ankle. She jerks her leg, panicking, fighting to keep her head above water.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
You will not pull me down!

The hand tightens its grip, dragging her under the surface. Andrea thrashes wildly, bubbles rising as she fights for every inch. Another hand grips her other leg, pulling harder. She's being dragged deeper into the darkness.

EXT. STREET - DAY

WHAM! Andrea slams into the ground, landing hard on her side on a street paved with gold bricks. She groans, rolling over in pain. Her fingers brush against her forehead, feeling a rising lump.

ANDREA

(pain)

Ouch! I didn't stick the landing on that one.

Shivering, she tries to steady herself, the wind's chill biting through her clothes. Slowly, she pushes herself to her knees, wincing as she straightens. The cold bites deeper, making her hug her body for warmth.

A large sign looms in front of her: "WELCOME TO INCEPTION HEIGHTS, YOUR IMAGINATION, OUR REALITY."

Andrea stares at the sign, then cautiously rises to her feet. Beyond the sign, she catches a glimpse of movement – a foot shifting in the distance.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Who's there?

She quickly ducks behind the sign, her heart pounding. The foot moves again, accompanied by a low, agonized moan. Her eyes widen.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Jack?

She moves cautiously toward the figure, recognizing the familiar shape. As she gets closer, she sees it is indeed Jack, slumped on the ground, barely conscious. Without hesitation, she darts to his side, grabbing and shaking his arm.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Come on, stay awake, Jack!

Jack's eyes flicker open, a weak smile forming on his lips.

JACK

This -
 (he coughs)
 - this is already a nightmare.

Andrea pulls him up, her hands trembling slightly. She hooks her arm around his shoulder, helping him stand.

ANDREA

Did you go through water, too?

Jack leans heavily on her, squinting through the pain.

JACK

No. After the portal grabbed us, I ended up in a hallway. Then -

He winces, clutching his ribs.

JACK (CONT'D)

I kept getting hit by something, like an electric shock. The next thing I knew, I was falling and -

He gestures weakly to the ground.

JACK (CONT'D)

I landed here.

Andrea glances around. The eerie stillness of the golden-bricked road stretches out before them. There are no signs of life, no sounds, except for their labored breathing.

ANDREA

We need to head into Inception Heights. Mama and Papa, they're here somewhere. I can feel it.

Jack frowns, looking around skeptically.

JACK

This place. It's too quiet. Just listen.

The silence presses in on them, the unnatural stillness making Andrea's stomach churn. She starts biting her nails, and a nervous habit resurfaces.

ANDREA

If we stay here too long... We become quiet.

Her voice trails off, but the unspoken fear lingers in the air. Jack nods, his face pale but determined.

JACK
Right, let's keep moving.

Together, they start walking. As they crest a ridge, their eyes widen at the sight before them.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

A picturesque town lies before us, filled with paved roads, charming buildings, and lush trees. Oddly, the sun and moon occupy the sky, casting a surreal glow over everything.

ANDREA
(eyes wide)
Unbelievable.

JACK
(grinning)
All we had to do was walk over the ridge.

Andrea turns, her gaze drawn to the encroaching darkness behind them.

ANDREA
What the—

She steps back in disbelief as the road behind them dissolves into shadows.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
This is strange.

Jack spins around, peering into the dark.

JACK
It's like the path... disappears as we move forward.

ANDREA
(gripping Jack's arm)
We can't turn back. We have to keep moving. Our parents are out there somewhere.

They turn to face the shimmering path ahead, the darkness creeping ominously behind them.

JACK
Right. Forward it is.

As they walk, a VINE, blooming with vibrant flowers, slithers out from the side and extends toward them.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (raising an eyebrow)
 That's... odd.

VINE
 (suddenly animated)
 Frank, I found them!

Another vine joins, curling around Jack and Andrea.

ANDREA
 (eyes widening)
 Wait, the vines can talk? This is trippy.

JACK
 Is this what being high feels like?

VINE TWO
 I say we take them now!

ANDREA
 (taking a step back)
 Hold up! You're not taking us anywhere!

VINE
 You're the ones who belong to Mama and Papa, YES?

ANDREA
 Do you know where they are?

VINE
 We can take you to them... after the meal. You are hungry, aren't you?

Jack steps forward, his stomach rumbling.

JACK
 (nodding)
 Death makes you hungry

ANDREA
 Jack? No. We're not going anywhere with you until we find our parents.

Suddenly, the Vines wrap tightly around Jack, who struggles against their grasp.

VINE TWO
 Come for a ride. We can take you too them.

VINE

Yeah, we need to feed you to the soil.

ANDREA

(thoughts racing)

This is insane. You can't eat us. You don't even have teeth!

The other Vine encircles Andrea, squeezing tighter with each futile struggle.

JACK

'Drea! They said they can take us to Mama and Papa!

ANDREA

(determined)

I don't trust them, Jack. I trust myself.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Vines suddenly release Jack and Andrea, sending them tumbling onto the road, right next to a gate. The Vines whip back.

VINE (O.S.)

We are the beginning of your twisted journey, 'Drea.

ANDREA

What?

JACK

'Drea? Who are you talking to?

ANDREA

The Vines.

(Jack's confused look)

Never mind, I think this is where Mama and Papa are.

Andrea reaches for the gate, but as she grasps the handle, she's struck back by a branch, landing hard on the ground.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

(groaning)

Hey! What gives?

The Crooked Tree, a twisted entity, looms over her, oozing a sticky sap.

JACK
What are you doing to my sister?!

CROOKED TREE
(deadpan)
I'm the guardian here. You cannot enter. That's just not allowed.

Struggling to her feet, Andrea finds her vision blurring, the world spinning around her.

ANDREA
(voice fading)
Why?

CROOKED TREE
The Executioner lives here. If you cross his path, he'll kill you.

JACK
(whispering)
'Drea, that's our cue to run!

Andrea glares at him, her resolve hardening.

ANDREA
I'm not leaving your side, Jack.
But I won't abandon Mom and Dad.

The Crooked Tree blocks their path, its branches looming like prison bars.

CROOKED TREE
You are not allowed to proceed.

Desperate, Andrea lunges for the door again. The Crooked Tree retaliates, sending her sprawling to the ground.

ANDREA
(shouting)
What the hell?

The Crooked Tree's branches lash out, hitting her with a thick sap.

JACK
(yelling)
Get away from her!

CROOKED TREE
(unfazed)
I don't like humans. I just helped you because the Executioner asked for a favor.

Andrea's eyes widen.

ANDREA
Why would the Executioner do that?

CROOKED TREE
He wants all humans out of here.
The faster you find what you're
looking for, the better off you
are.

ANDREA
(frantic)
Are they inside? Can we see him?

The Crooked Tree leans against the house, blocking their way.

CROOKED TREE
I can't let you do that.

ANDREA
(pleading)
We need to find my parents!

The Crooked Tree looms closer, its bark-like face stern.

CROOKED TREE
If you cross the Executioner's
path, he will kill you instantly.

JACK
(nervous)
'Drea, let's go! This is bad!

The Crooked Tree's branches block the door firmly against
their wishes.

CROOKED TREE
You are not allowed.

Andrea lunges for the door, only to be battered back again.

ANDREA
(frustrated)
Why are you doing this?

The Crooked Tree injects her with sap again, sending her
reeling.

CROOKED TREE
You have no idea what you're up
against.

EXT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK

The sun dips low, casting long shadows. Andrea stands outside her childhood home, looking deeply concerned as she watches through the darkened window.

CROOKED TREE (V.O.)
Can you make out Eric Jones?

ANDREA
(squinting, anxious)
I recognize him. Hey, Eric! He's
one of my closest friends.

As she speaks, ERIC JONES (23, cloaked in shadow) approaches, his demeanor tense, his eyes wild.

CROOKED TREE (V.O.)
This has already happened.

INT. ROOM - FLASHBACK

Eric and Andrea stand in an all-white room. Eric hands Andrea a bag.

ERIC
(takes Andrea's hand)
Take this, please.

ANDREA
(surprised)
What is it?

ERIC
(nods head)
Something I made for you. If I get
caught tonight, I'm dead. You, on
the other hand, can live on.

ANDREA
(shaking)
Don't go. It's too dangerous.

ERIC
(pulls away)
It's for both of our futures. We
can be free.
(points to head)
Freedom in our heads.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. YARD - DAY

Eric is approaching the house. Andrea looks out at him.

JACK (V.O.)
(urgent, panicking)
'Drea, nobody is here.

ANDREA
(voice trembling)
Jack, I can see him. He's heading
towards the front door!

Jack's voice crackles through the static, fearful.

JACK (V.O.)
He tried to strangle his family.

ANDREA
(voice breaking)
No, Eric was different. He was
broken!

Eric glances around nervously, his hands trembling as he jiggles the front door handle.

CROOKED TREE (V.O.)
I was sleeping. I didn't have time
to stop Eric.

With a swift movement, Eric pulls out a lock pick, deftly unlocking the door. Andrea's eyes widen in horror as she races towards him.

ANDREA
(yelling)
Stop! It's a trap!

But as she lunges, her body phases through Eric as if he were made of mist.

ERIC
(turning, half-smirking)
Easy.

Andrea stumbles back, her heart racing. She watches helplessly as Eric steps through the threshold.

JACK (V.O.)
'Drea, come back to reality.

CROOKED TREE
(somberly)
She can't.

Suddenly, PHILIP (O.S.), an ominous figure lurking in the shadows, speaks up, his tone dripping with disdain.

PHILIP (O.S.)
You are not the most intelligent
person, are you?

As he enters the dim light, a chilling smile spreads across his face.

PHILIP (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Are we breaking into the house of a
person called the Executioner? We
hate humans in this place.

ERIC (O.S.)
(defiantly)
This is where the evil stems from
in this town. It must be destroyed.

Suddenly, a LOUD CRASH echoes. BAM! BAM! Gunfire erupts, splattering blood against the window. Eric goes flying through the glass, collapsing to the ground outside.

ANDREA
(screaming)
ERIC!

She rushes to the window, her heart in her throat as she sees Eric, lifeless and riddled with bullets. She falls to her knees, tears streaming down her cheeks.

The window shatters, and in an instant, Eric and the blood vanish into thin air, leaving Andrea breathless, alone, haunted by the echoes of what just transpired.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(upset)
I told Eric not to go that night.

SNAP. Eric vanishes, as does the glass

END SEQUENCE

EXT. HOUSE - PRESENT

The sun hangs low in the sky, casting eerie shadows over the old house. Andrea shakes her head to clear her thoughts.

ANDREA
I felt like I was injected with
drugs.

Suddenly, a sinister presence looms. The Crooked tree, ancient and gnarled, stirs ominously.

CROOKED TREE
(deep, rumbling voice)
Leave this place now.

Jack shifts nervously.

JACK
Where's our Mama and Papa?

As if answering, a SHADOW CREATURE emerges from the darkness of the tree, its red eyes glowing, claws sharp and ready to strike.

ANDREA
(gasping)
What is that?

JACK
Whatever it is, it isn't friendly.

The Crooked tree chuckles, its voice dripping with malice.

CROOKED TREE
I told you, you aren't getting into that house. So I might as well kill you instead.

The Shadow Creature growls, scurrying toward Andrea with menacing intent.

ANDREA
(voice trembling)
It's ready to do some damage.

JACK
Let's get out of here!

Andrea locks eyes with Jack, her resolve hardening.

ANDREA
If Mama and Papa are alive, we must find them. They could be in that house.

Jack hesitates, torn between fear and loyalty. He looks back at Andrea, then dashes away.

JACK
You said you have my back!

The Shadow Creature lunges toward Jack with a deafening howl. Andrea's heart races as she sprints to save him.

ANDREA
(shouting)
You have the power to stop this!

The Crooked Tree sneers.

CROOKED TREE
I always like deals in return.

Andrea pushes through the fear, running faster toward Jack. She tackles the Shadow Creature to the ground, catching it off guard.

ANDREA
(fiercely)
I will kill this thing where it
stands!

The creature growls, surprise flashing in its red eyes. It swipes at Andrea with its claws, but she holds it down. The Crooked Tree sighs heavily, annoyance in its tone.

CROOKED TREE
(whistles)
Release the beast.

Reluctantly, Andrea lets the creature go. It spins around and lunges for Jack, its teeth glistening with drool, ready to strike at his neck.

CROOKED TREE (CONT'D)
Come and get some food!

Confusion washes over Andrea. "Is she the food?" she wonders.

The Shadow Creature ignores her, barreling past and grazing her arm as it lunges for Jack.

ANDREA
(frustrated)
I would've killed it!

The creature races up to the house's roof, disappearing in the shadows. Andrea runs over to Jack, who is shaking.

JACK
(voice trembling)
This place, this whole town, is
dangerous. I want to go home.

ANDREA
We can't just yet. We have to find
Mama and Papa.

Jack wipes tears from his eyes, desperation in his voice.

JACK
Can we let that go? It can be the
two of us, 'Drea.

Andrea's heart breaks as she shakes her head.

ANDREA
(crying)
I can't. Not until I have them. We
can be a family again.

JACK
(sighs, nodding)
Okay.

Andrea pulls Jack into a tight embrace, both holding on to the hope of what could be. After a moment, she breaks away and walks back toward the Crooked Tree.

ANDREA
(determined)
Get me in that damn house.

CROOKED TREE
It's not that easy.

Andrea, fueled by frustration, punches the tree. Her knuckles bleed, but she stands her ground.

ANDREA
Let us in!

The Crooked Tree bends slightly, its branches shaking with disapproval.

CROOKED TREE
All you will do is hurt yourself.

The wind whispers, "Hurt yourself." Andrea glances back at Jack, who looks increasingly worried.

JACK
'Drea, let's get out of here. This
tree will be wood chips shortly.

CROOKED TREE
(mockingly)
I'm going to be around for a long
time.

Andrea, a spark of defiance in her eyes, scans the yard and spots a rusted metal rod. She grabs it with newfound resolve.

ANDREA
Let's make a deal.

She jabs the metal rod into a hole in the tree, a glint of mischief in her eyes.

CROOKED TREE
(startled)
What are you doing?

ANDREA
I assume you get lightning here.

Crooked Tree lunges to grab the rod, but she holds it firm.

CROOKED TREE
Take it out!

ANDREA
Get us into the house and arrange a
meeting with the Executioner.

The Crooked Tree pauses, considering.

CROOKED TREE
Fine, but to avoid getting
executed, you have to get captured.
Now remove this damn thing.

Andrea glances at Jack, determination etched on her face.

ANDREA
(resolute)
Then, let's get captured.

INT. GAME ROOM - DAY

The room is dimly lit, filled with the sharp sounds of a dartboard, the clink of pool balls, and the thud of a bowling ball rolling down its lane. Andrea and Jack step into the game room, surveying the strange environment.

JACK
(glancing around)
It's a trap.

ANDREA
 (narrowing her eyes)
 We have to find out where Mama and
 Papa are.

Suddenly, the lights flicker and go out. A tense silence
 fills the room.

PHILIP (O.S.)
 (voice echoing, dripping
 with menace)
 You wanted to meet the one, the
 only Executioner.

JACK (O.S.)
 Let go of me!

ANDREA (O.S.)
 Jack!

The lights flicker back on, revealing Jack tied up on the
 dartboard, eyes wide with fear. Andrea stumbles, trying to
 keep her balance on the bouncy floor beneath her.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 Let my brother go!

PHILIP EVILTON (45, bald, piercing blue eyes, wearing blood-
 red soaked scrubs) strides in, circling Andrea like a
 predator eyeing its prey.

PHILIP
 (smirking)
 I need assurance that you won't
 attack me if I unstrap you.

Andrea, fueled by adrenaline, takes a step forward.

ANDREA
 (voice steady, determined)
 Where's my Mama and Papa?

Philip chuckles darkly, picking up a dart, and with a flick
 of his wrist, he throws it, narrowly missing Jack.

JACK
 (panicking)
 'Drea! He's mean. He can't be
 trusted. He needs to be stopped.

PHILIP
 (voice dripping with
 cruelty)
 (MORE)

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Your parents are being
dissected-examined, to understand
what makes them tick. We need to
learn how to take over your world.

Andrea's face flushes red with anger.

ANDREA
Why my parents?

Philip brushes his chin, a wicked grin spreading across his face.

PHILIP
Because your Papa disturbed our
town when he found our portal.

With a sinister wave of his hand, the dart magically shifts, now hovering dangerously close to Jack's neck.

ANDREA
(frantically)
Let my brother go! Give me back my
parents! Let us leave, and we won't
disturb you again.

Philip cracks his neck, relishing the moment.

PHILIP
You break into my town, my home,
and expect me to let you go?

He snaps his fingers. The dart suddenly pierces Jack's neck, causing him to gasp.

JACK
(choking out)
No.

Enraged, Andrea leaps into action, her fists clenched. She rushes at Philip, throwing a punch, but he sidesteps, moving with an unnerving speed. With a swift motion, she manages to land a punch on his nose, drawing blood.

ANDREA
I will destroy you.

PHILIP
(snarling, unimpressed)
No. I'm just getting impatient.

His hand morphs into a claw, and he slashes at Andrea's leg, causing her to cry out in pain.

ANDREA
(gritting her teeth)
Aargh!

She falls to the floor, struggling to crawl toward Jack, who's trying to catch his breath.

PHILIP
Foolish girl. I was going to let you leave and forget about this place. Now? Now, I'll feast on you.

ANDREA
(pleading, desperate)
Please... give me back my Mama and Papa.

Philip's eyes glow an ominous yellow as he revels in her fear.

PHILIP
You have awoken the beast within.
Prepare to be feasted on.

Andrea feels the wound on her leg and winces.

ANDREA
(determined)
Damn.

As Philip begins to transform, his mouth elongates and sharpens, and his teeth grow menacingly. Andrea glances at Jack, her heart racing.

He hurls three darts at Jack. They hover in midair, time seeming to stretch.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(eyes wide)
Are those darts in slow motion?

JACK
(voice strained)
'Drea, whatever you do, don't forget about me when you rescue Mama and Papa!

ANDREA
(breathing heavily)
Somehow, the physics here are all screwed up.

PHILIP
(laughs, controlling the
physics of the room)
I take care of the physics here.
(snaps his fingers)
But you can control the physics
here if you want to.

Suddenly, Andrea spots a bowling ball on the floor. Summoning all her strength, she grabs it and stands, swinging it with all her might. The ball slams into Philip's face.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
(dazed, staggering back)
Do you think that hurts?

He crashes to the ground, unconscious. But the darts remain inches from Jack, who is still incapacitated.

JACK
(softly)
I love you, 'Drea.

Just then, Andrea rushes forward, using the bowling ball to knock the darts down before they can harm Jack.

ANDREA
There's no way I'm letting you go!

She unties Jack from the dartboard, and he drops to the ground, rubbing the wound on his neck.

JACK
(winces, but relieved)
It's not too deep.

Andrea's leg is still bleeding. She frantically scans the room for anything to help.

ANDREA
(desperately)
Can anything in here be used for
the wound?

Her eyes land on a chalky cue stick.

JACK
Can we use this stuff?

Andrea quickly grabs the chalk, wiping it over her wound.

ANDREA
It's okay for a quick fix.

Jack stands, cracking his neck.

JACK
(feeling better)
It feels better.

ANDREA
That's great.

JACK
Where to next?

Andrea looks up, determination burning in her eyes.

ANDREA
I knew we were in the basement but
had to get upstairs somehow. They
said something about experimenting
on Mama and Papa.

With renewed resolve, Jack and Andrea leap toward the door.
Suddenly—

BAM!

Philip springs up, slamming a bowling ball into Andrea's gut.
She collapses, gasping for air.

PHILIP
It takes a lot of work to escape
and not be unwell. You need to do
the job. I can only go so far.

He towers over her, a malevolent glint in his eyes.

ANDREA
(voice strained)
Please don't eat us.

PHILIP
You expect not to die here? Then
concentrate, Andrea. You can break
through the night.

Andrea can barely focus on his claws and teeth as she
struggles to breathe. As all seems lost, Jack lunges forward,
brandishing a sharp metal pole. With a fierce determination,
he stabs Philip in the side. The monstrous figure howls in
pain and collapses.

JACK
(rushing to Andrea)
Come on, 'Drea! We can do this.
Don't lose me!

Overwhelmed with emotion, Andrea rolls her eyes back, fading into unconsciousness.

SURGEON (V.O.)
We are losing her. She's crashing,
I- I don't know what to do.

BLACKOUT

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Andrea walks around, the lights flickering ominously overhead.

ANDREA
I feel... heavy, like my bones are
made of lead. What's happening?

Suddenly, a RADIO crackles to life, the cheerful melody clashing with the eerie atmosphere.

RADIO (O.S.)
(singing)
If you are to survive, I will stay
in the light. That is how you stay
alive. Ah, ha, ha, ha, stayin'
alive, stayin' alive!

Andrea perks up, a spark of recognition igniting her resolve.

ANDREA
(voice filled with hope)
Mama's workout song. They're
close... I can feel Mama and Papa!

JACK
(frowning)
When I stabbed the Executioner, he
mumbled something about having
pets. We don't want to run into
them.

A brisk wind suddenly sweeps through the room from the door at the top of the stairs. Andrea shivers, her instincts kicking in.

ANDREA
Cold...

They both dash toward the light coming from a window across the room. Suddenly, a Shadow Creature lunges at them, claws glinting dangerously.

JACK
(eyes wide)
Not again!

ANDREA
(calculating)
I wonder if it's too blind to see
the light? Quick, let's go!

Andrea and Jack sprint toward the small patch of light. The Shadow Creature sniffs the air, its head swiveling as it searches for them.

JACK
(breathing heavily)
The shadow can't see the light.

ANDREA
(keeping her voice low)
We should be safe as long as we
stay still.

JACK
(trying to lighten the
mood)
Can't you wrestle it again?

ANDREA
(with a hint of sarcasm)
Yeah, right. With those claws? It
would shred me!

JACK
(grinning)
You're always so bright.

ANDREA
(smirking)
Thanks, I appreciate that.

The RADIO suddenly plays another tune, shifting the atmosphere once again.

RADIO (O.S.)
(singing)
You ain't nothing but a hound dog.
And you ain't no friend of mine.

ANDREA
Uh-oh.

JACK
(eyes narrowing)
The radio again? Don't you think
they're calling for backup?

As if on cue, two more Shadow Creatures appear, their claws dragging along the concrete floor with a dreadful CREAK.

Heavy lighting and THUNDER crash outside, the bright light above dimming.

ANDREA
Damn, this weather!

They exchange worried glances as the creatures close in.

JACK
(voice trembling)
This is not good.

ANDREA
(thinking fast)
Maybe it's like that dino movie. If
we stay perfectly still, they won't
notice us.

Andrea grips Jack's arm, squeezing it for comfort as the creatures inch closer.

JACK
(nervously)
I'm trusting your instinct here.

ANDREA
I'll trust yours, too.

The creatures come into full view, their translucent skin shimmering eerily in the dim light. Their red eyes gleam with hunger, and foam drips from their snarling mouths as they wag their tails, stalking their prey.

JACK
(voice dropping)
It's not working...

ANDREA
(breath hitching)
We need a new plan.

They back themselves against the wall in desperation.

JACK
(urgently)
'Drea, think of something quick!

Andrea notices the creatures' eyes fixated on her, their anticipation palpable.

ANDREA
(determined)
We have to reach those stairs. When
I say run, you bolt!

JACK
Are you insane?

ANDREA
(firmly)
You're not allowed to call me that!

As the Shadow Creatures creep closer, Andrea slowly removes her right shoe, her heart racing.

JACK
(confused)
What are you doing?

ANDREA
Get ready—

She peels off her right sock, doing it painstakingly slow. The Shadow Creatures watch, entranced, drool pooling.

JACK
(whispers)
'Drea -

ANDREA
(urgently)
Now!

In a swift motion, Andrea throws her sock to the far side of the room. The Shadow Creatures dart after it, giving them the opening they need. Jack and Andrea race up the stairs, tripping and tumbling as they go.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Go, go, go!

Just as they reach the door at the top, Andrea shoves Jack into the hallway.

JACK
(panicking)
What are you going to do?

ANDREA
 (breathless, determined)
 Just trust me!

Andrea spins around, running back as the Shadow Creatures approach the door. She slams it shut behind her with a BANG!

CLUNK! CLUNK! The creatures tumble down the stairs, their yelps of frustration echoing in the dark.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

The sun shines brightly on a yard full of vibrant flowers, green grass, and towering trees. Andrea and Jack stand at the edge, enjoying the serene beauty around them.

ANDREA
 (sighs deeply, feeling the warmth)
 We must head to the second floor,
 where Mama and Papa will be.

JACK
 (pointing toward a ladder lying in the grass)
 That shouldn't be a problem. Look!

Andrea approaches the ladder, but snowflakes drift down from the sky as she does.

ANDREA
 (sneezes)
 Great, winter's here early.

JACK
 (wiping his nose)
 That's not snow. Those are dandelion seeds!

The seeds float to the ground, and suddenly, they sprout. From the ground, WEED CREATURES emerge—yellow dandelions that open their mouths to reveal sharp, jagged teeth.

WEED CREATURE
 (hungrily)
 Feed us human flesh!

The creatures make a noise reminiscent of a vacuum, sucking in the air around them. Andrea's eyes widen in horror.

ANDREA
 (urgently)
 Jack, grab that ladder!

The air-sucking intensifies, becoming a whirlwind around them.

JACK
(trying to stay grounded)
This feels like a tornado!

Suddenly, a BIRD flies overhead and gets sucked down into a Weed Creature's mouth. The sound of CRUNCHING echoes as the creature devours it.

WEED CREATURE
(gleefully)
Animals make an excellent snack!
But I want human flesh for dinner!

Jack's stomach churns.

JACK
(retching)
I think I'm going to be sick.

He bends over and vomits. The vomit splatters into the mouths of the Weed Creatures. Andrea grimaces, her face turning green.

ANDREA
Gross! That's not good.

The air pressure increases, and Jack and Andrea are slowly lifted off the ground.

JACK
(panicking)
This can't be the end!

ANDREA
(clenching her fists)
Not like this!

As they float upward, Andrea shouts to Jack.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
Find something to hold onto!

Jack is swept away, heading towards a Weed Creature's mouth.

JACK
(desperate)
Goodbye, 'Drea!

Andrea pushes herself towards Jack with all her strength, kicking him out of harm's way just in time.

ANDREA
Not this time, Jack!

The ladder gets caught up in the whirlwind and is sent flying into the pack of Weed Creatures, BEHEADING most of them in one swift motion. The wind dies down, and Andrea and Jack hit the ground hard.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(stomach growling)
I could eat anything right now.

They glance at the two remaining Weed Creatures, still writhing on the ground.

Andrea lunges at one, biting its head off.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(wiping her mouth)
Ugh, that's better than nothing.

JACK
(hungry)
I could go for some chocolate.

ANDREA
(smiling through the chaos)
Bubble gum would be excellent, too.

They share a moment of laughter amidst the madness.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(standing up)
We better keep moving.

END SEQUENCE

EXT. YARD - DAY

Jack and Andrea fade into the Mist. Papa enters the yard, looking around.

PAPA
(sadness)
That's not what I meant with weeding. Oh, the beautiful yard.

While the weeds are gone, the flowers are torn to bits, and the garden is ripped to shreds.

Papa cries and pounds his chest.

END SCENE

EXT. YARD - DAY

Papa fades away. Jack reforms. Andrea unfreezes.

PAPA (O.S.)
(screaming)
Andrea.

Andrea looks around, perplexed.

ANDREA
(perplexed)
Papa?

Jack snaps his fingers.

JACK
Earth to 'Drea. Mama and Papa are
on the second floor, right?

ANDREA walks over to the ladder.

ANDREA
Jack, can you help me?

She turns around, but Jack is frozen, as if time has stopped. Philip suddenly appears next to him, a smug grin on his face.

PHILIP
(mockingly)
My dear, he belongs to me now.
Those darts I used? They marked him
as my property. But if you try, you
can control him with your -

Jack stands motionless, blood seeping down his face.

ANDREA
(voice trembling)
What did you do to him?

Philip glances at Jack, then back to Andrea.

PHILIP
You entered my world. I might as
well add a pet. Let me teach -

JACK
 (screams)
 Ah!

Jack covers his face with his hands, and blood pours through his fingers.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (despondent)
 I'm so sorry, 'Drea. I messed everything up.

INT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK

The screen is in BLACK AND WHITE, giving it a dreamlike quality. Jack is motionless on the ground, his body limp. Andrea rushes over, panic etched on her face.

ANDREA
 (kneeling beside Jack,
 shaking him gently)
 Jack! Come on, please! You have to be alive!

She presses her hands against his chest, desperately willing him to respond—her heart races.

FLASH TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - PRESENT

Andrea rushes toward Jack, but the closer she gets, the further he seems to drift away.

ANDREA
 What is this?

Jack's hands drop, revealing eyes that are now pitch black.

DARK JACK
 (with a chilling calm)
 Hello, 'Drea.

Andrea stares, horrified.

ANDREA
 What's happened to you?

DARK JACK
 Nothing. I'm becoming something... new. It feels... freeing.

Andrea lunges again, but Philip raises a hand.

PHILIP

You won't get far, no matter how hard you try. I can tell you a story.

ANDREA

(determined)

I don't want your stories!

PHILIP

(smirking)

I could end your brother's life right here. Just a snap of my fingers. It would help you to move forward, for you to understand what you did.

He snaps, and Dark Jack collapses to the ground, lifeless.

ANDREA

(screaming)

No!

Philip snaps again, and Dark Jack rises, now levitating.

DARK JACK

(gloating)

Look at me. I can fly!

Philip nods, proud of his control.

PHILIP

When you first came here -

DARK JACK

I was already dead. Remember?

PHILIP

Death is my specialty. But for you my dear -

Andrea collapses to her knees, heartbroken.

ANDREA

(choking back tears)

My brother is dead...

Dark Jack hovers above, taunting her.

DARK JACK

I'm not dead, 'Drea. I'm reborn.

Philip claps his hands, relishing the chaos.

PHILIP

A better body, better mind—cheaper
than the competition!

Andrea covers her face in despair.

ANDREA

Why make me suffer through this?

Philip steps closer, a sinister glint in his eyes.

PHILIP

I have a proposal for you. I'm
feeling generous today, so if you
take it, you'll be better.

Andrea rises, defiant.

ANDREA

What do you want?

Philip grins.

PHILIP

Your brother and parents in
exchange for you. I need to study
you. Let me fix you.

Dark Jack floats down beside her, powerful and confident.

DARK JACK

I don't want to go back. I feel
more powerful than ever.

Philip laughs heartily, and Andrea, trembling with rage,
paces around.

ANDREA

This seems more manageable, but—

She glances towards the gate.

PHILIP (O.C.)

Take your time, but remember: the
longer you wait, the more dangerous
it gets. If you just let me catch
you now, I can fix you.

Andrea steels herself, determination filling her voice.

ANDREA

I'll find a way to see my parents.
I'll leave if you show them to me.

PHILIP (O.C.)

(taunting)
You might not like what you see.

ANDREA

(eyes burning with fury)
I'll hunt you down if you don't
show them!

PHILIP (O.C.)

Through the gate, my dear. The
deeper your journey gets.

Andrea opens the gate, stepping forward, ready to confront whatever lies ahead.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A vibrant neighborhood street bustling with life. Children play. Dogs bark in the distance. Amid this normalcy, Andrea sprints into the frame, her face filled with desperation.

ANDREA

(voice shaky)
I'm sorry. Have you seen my
parents?

JOHN (45, rugged but kind) and JENNY (45, warm but frazzled) are huddled over a map, squinting at it, a GOLDEN LAB PUPPY sits at their feet. Startled, they turn towards Andrea, who has just collided with them, and the puppy barks.

JENNY

Oh my god, don't be! We're the
sorry ones. Are you okay?

JOHN

You looked frightened.

ANDREA

(panicked, shaking her
head)
Humans? No, this isn't right!

JOHN

(supportively)
Hey, it's all right. You're safe
here. Sometimes, a map helps in
situations like this.

Jenny steps closer, her eyes softening - the puppy sniffs.

JENNY
We can help you.

ANDREA
(warily)
Who are you?

JOHN
(rubbing the back of his
neck)
That's my bad. I took a wrong turn
in Boulder. Whoops.

ANDREA
(realizing)
My old neighbors? I remember you.
Hang on.

Jenny chuckles, trying to ease the tension. Suddenly, the vibrant colors around them fade to BLACK AND WHITE, as if the world is losing its essence.

JENNY
Never marry a guy terrible with
directions, you know.

ANDREA
(smiling faintly)
John was always getting lost.

JOHN
(musing)
As we get further in here, my
memory is getting hazy.

Andrea's smile fades, uncertainty creeping back.

JENNY
That happens a lot with him. Not
just here, so he's okay.

ANDREA
(teasing)
Your wife wanted a divorce.

Jenny pauses, a thoughtful look on her face.

JENNY
(smirking)
Come on, John. Grab the car.

John fumbles in his pockets, searching for his keys. The puppy lies down at their feet.

JOHN
(frustrated)
I don't remember where I parked it.

ANDREA
(pacing)
Wait, you never had a puppy. My family did.

JENNY
Tsk, tsk.

The Puppy yipes before fading into a black shadow.

ANDREA
(pacing)
She's going to kill you, John.
Remember, man!

Jenny snaps her fingers and COLOR FLOODS BACK into the scene, but it's not the vibrant colors of before. It's dark and ominous.

JENNY
You won't find your parents here.
You'll find monsters that lead to
your and John's death.

Andrea freezes, dread washing over her.

ANDREA
(voice trembling)
What does that mean?

JOHN
(confused)
Honey, what are you talking about?

In an instant, JENNY'S BODY becomes engulfed in a thick, ominous TAR that seeps from the ground, wrapping around her like a living entity.

JENNY
(voice distorted, almost
seductive)
The longer you stay, the more you
lose your mind.

Jenny lunges toward John, biting his neck.

JOHN
 (yelling)
 Aargh!

TAR flows into his wound, drowning him.

JENNY
 (cackling)
 Don't you want to feel like
 drowning in tar? It's exciting.

Andrea's eyes widen in horror as the tar begins to FILL THE STREET, bubbling and boiling like a sinister sea.

ANDREA
 (panicked, running)
 Can't touch me?

The tar sends a wave, attempting to breach the sidewalk. Andrea leaps onto the concrete, narrowly avoiding the advancing sludge.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
 (running)
 I can't let this be the end!

She sprints, dodging the dark waves as the tar HUNGRILY CHASES HER.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
 (to herself)
 I need to find my family.

JOHN
 (struggling)
 Help me, Andrea!

Andrea looks back, her heart torn.

ANDREA
 (determined)
 No! I can not get trapped here!

She pushes forward, the sounds of John's struggle fading behind her. The TAR splatters against the sidewalk, leaving a dark stain that seems to whisper her name.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
 (breathing heavily)
 I won't let this place win.

As she runs, she glances around, looking for any escape, and spots an ALLEYWAY ahead.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
 (hopeful)
 There!

She veers sharply into the alley, the shadows stretching ominously behind her. The tar crashes against the entrance, but she manages to slip inside just in time.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Andrea sprints down a quiet street, glancing back at the ominous tar that consumes everything in its path. She dodges between houses, their windows contorting into grotesque faces, peering out like watchful eyes.

The tar inches closer, tendrils reaching for her. Andrea spots the playground just ahead, a sanctuary where the darkness cannot touch her.

ANDREA
 (exhales deeply)
 Phew!

Children (8-10) play nearby, laughter ringing out. Andrea pauses, her heart racing. The laughter stops as three boys encircle her, grinning mischievously.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS

Everything bursts back into color. The boys, now playful, giggle at Andrea.

ANDREA
 What do you want?

A loud FIRECRACKER sounds. The boys flinch back. Distant and dark, Dark Jack drops before her, blocking her escape.

DARK JACK
 The children are mine. They do what
 I tell them to do.

ANDREA
 Am I dreaming?

DARK JACK
 This is all real, 'Drea.

Andrea paces, her eyes darting around, calculating.

ANDREA

I want to find Mama and Papa. We
can still win you back.

Dark Jack smirks, amusement flickering in his eyes.

DARK JACK

Your brother's gone, 'Drea.

ANDREA

(pleading)

Let's team up and find Mama and
Papa. Get out of here!

Dark Jack shakes his head, his smirk fading.

DARK JACK

Time to head to reality 'Drea. All
that is in front of you is real. Do
you see Mama and Papa?

Andrea feels a stab of anguish but fights to maintain her
composure. She steps forward, eyes fierce.

ANDREA

That's not true! If you can't see
it for yourself, then you know.

Dark Jack's expression shifts slightly, a flicker of doubt
crossing his face.

DARK JACK

Don't be foolish. But you can
believe what you want.

Andrea crosses her arms defiantly, not backing down.

ANDREA

You're not my brother. My brother
would have my back. No questions
asked.

Dark Jack rises, towering over her.

DARK JACK

I am better and stronger. Your
brother died.

Andrea looks around nervously, her determination flickering.

ANDREA

You won't help me?

DARK JACK
That's right.

With courage, Andrea strides toward one of the boys encircling her.

ANDREA
I will ask you again.

DARK JACK
(alarmed)
What are you doing?

Andrea suddenly punches the boy's stomach.

BOY
(gasping)
Ow!

The boy collapses, clutching his gut. Andrea steps back, breathing heavily.

ANDREA
Do you feel that? I can't attack you because I think Jack is still in there. But your Children? They're all fair game.

Dark Jack darts around, flapping his arms in panic.

DARK JACK
That hurt! I can make this whole town go away. Then Jack will be a memory.

Andrea looks around, haunted by memories.

ANDREA
Remember what happened? Mama and Papa had to lock me away.

She approaches a GIRL (9) standing nearby, and with a sudden burst of adrenaline, she punches the girl squarely in the face. Blood trickles from the girl's nose, and Dark Jack winces in pain.

DARK JACK
(shocked)
Do you want to destroy this town? Everything you ever know is gone.

ANDREA
Why wouldn't you? I feel I've given you little choice.

Dark Jack dives down, barely avoiding the ground.

DARK JACK
'Drea, why?

Andrea grasps a child and throws them onto the ground. Dark Jack stumbles back, stunned.

ANDREA
I know you are in there. I know we
can rescue Mama and Papa. I will
get you to help me.

Dark Jack clutches his head. Confusion etched across his features.

DARK JACK
You're draining my powers.

Andrea strides over to Dark Jack, determination blazing in her eyes.

ANDREA
Are you going to join me? Or are
you going to stay here and do
nothing but goof around?

Dark Jack's expression shifts. His eyes flicker, struggling against the darkness.

DARK JACK
I don't have much time.

ANDREA
Jack? It's you.

She reaches out, helping Dark Jack to his feet.

DARK JACK
I'm being controlled. It's like I'm
Philip's puppet.

All the children on the playground collapse, eyes shut, shadows hovering above them.

ANDREA
Can we break the controls so I can
have you back?

Dark Jack shivers, fear evident in his voice.

DARK JACK
I'm feeling normal again.

Suddenly, the children join hands, emitting BLUE SWIRLY SOUND WAVES that resonate like distant cries. The force sends Andrea flying backward.

ANDREA
(screaming)
Jack! I'm coming toward you!

A LOUD BOOM echoes as Philip (18, menacing) strides into the chaos.

PHILIP
I hate having to fix you. It should be easier than this.

He grabs Dark Jack and pulls him to his feet.

ANDREA
(defiantly)
Stay away from him!

The sound waves cease, a tense silence settling over the playground.

PHILIP
It's too easy to get lost in your own thoughts, it's harder to fight that urge.

Philip shoots Dark Jack in the stomach. In stark black and white, Dark Jack gasps, clutching his wound. Color floods back as Andrea reaches out in desperation.

ANDREA
(screaming)
No! It feels like all over again!

Tears stream down her face as Dark Jack collapses, his strength waning.

PHILIP
Go home. Forget about your rescue mission. Face reality. Help yourself.

Andrea's rage fuels her steps as she lunges at Philip.

ANDREA
You are a monster! But I will kill you!

Philip bares his teeth, revealing sharp, werewolf fangs.

PHILIP

I am a monster, and so are you.

Andrea falls to her knees, defeat washing over her.

ANDREA

I want my Mama and Papa. I want this all to go away. Give them back!

Philip lingers, contemplating her anguish, his drool glistening at her despair.

PHILIP

I'll take you to your parents.

Andrea pauses, hope flickering amid her tears.

ANDREA

(cautiously)

Why would you do such a thing?

PHILIP

Mutually beneficial. This world is broken, partially because you have survived for this long. I get you out of my hair. You get to see your parents. Learn the truth, and get out of here.

With gritted teeth, Andrea struggles to her knees, determination rising again.

ANDREA

I will kill you if I have the chance.

PHILIP

You never will. Do you want to see your parents or not? Maybe it will help you remember.

Andrea clenches her jaw, blood trickling from her mouth as she contemplates Philip's proposition.

FADE OUT

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The sun casts long shadows over the gravestones as Andrea, strong yet visibly shaken, carries Dark Jack's lifeless body toward a freshly dug grave.

Philip, a disheveled specter with an unsettling grin, hovers just behind her, his eyes glinting with a strange hunger.

PHILIP
(Smirking)
You can bury your brother if you
like, again.

The screen momentarily goes BLACK AND WHITE as Andrea gently lays Jack in a shallow grave, the epitaph reading: "Jack Refuge 2012-2024." She brushes dirt off her hands, her face mixed with disbelief and sorrow.

ANDREA
(Voice trembling)
I don't believe it. How is this
even possible?

Color floods back in, but it feels dull, washed out. Philip watches her, his expression oddly amused.

PHILIP
You know he's been dead. That's
what led you here in the first
place.

Andrea spins around, anger igniting within her.

ANDREA
You promised you would take me to
my parents! Where are they?

Suddenly, a WHITE RABBIT darts past, drawing Philip's attention. He licks his lips, captivated.

PHILIP
(Oblivious)
Dinner.

Andrea slaps him across the face, her frustration boiling over.

ANDREA
Don't you dare get distracted!

Philip shakes his head, regaining focus.

PHILIP
You're right. But I've got some bad
news about your Papa. Remember.

He gestures towards a nearby grave. The stone reads: "PAPA REFUGE 1955-2025."

END SCENE

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

In the rain, Andrea, all alone, is standing at a gravestone.

ANDREA
(Stunned)
Papa's dead? No, it can't be.

END SEQUENCE

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Philip appears behind Andrea.

PHILIP
(Laughs darkly)
Like the day he opened that portal,
your mind – he knew.

Andrea's world begins to spin as everything fades back to BLACK AND WHITE. She drops to her knees, tears streaming down her cheeks.

ANDREA
(Whispers)
Papa's dead, too?

Philip coughs, the sound echoing in the graveyard's eerie silence.

Philip shrugs, his insensitivity palpable.

PHILIP
I'm feeling hungry. I need a break.

Andrea grabs him by the collar, desperation written all over her face.

ANDREA
(Choking back sobs)
Please.

Philip bows mockingly.

PHILIP
 (With a twisted grin)
 I'm a monster, but I get it. Give
 yourself time to remember.

Philip strolls out of the graveyard, leaving Andrea kneeling
 in front of the grave, trembling.

ANDREA
 (pleading)
 Papa, how did you die?

A VOICE, haunting and distant, echoes from the grave.

VOICE (O.S.)
 You don't remember?

Andrea's heart races as she scans the graveyard, confusion
 and fear swirling within her.

ANDREA
 (Shaky)
 Hello?

A BLOODY HAND thrusts up from the earth, followed by a
 decayed figure rising—Papa, disheveled and grotesque, his
 face marred by lesions, hollow eyes staring blankly.

PAPA
 (Weak, strained)
 Why did you follow us here? This
 battle was mine to fight—for you.

The words echo ominously, chilling Andrea to her core. She
 stares, frozen.

ANDREA
 (Voice cracking)
 I—I don't understand. Your—Your...

Papa grins, his expression twisted, as he fixes his crooked
 nose, then sneezes, unleashing BLACK SNAKES that slither from
 his mouth.

PAPA
 (Playfully sinister)
 What's the matter? Can't you
 recognize good ol' Papa?

The black snakes slither around Andrea, hissing menacingly.
 She gasps, fear washing over her.

ANDREA
(Desperate)
You're—You're dead.

PAPA
(Smirking)
The dead can still have fun while
we decay.

The snakes inch closer to Andrea's face.

ANDREA
(Frantic)
Get off me!

With sheer will, Andrea yanks the snakes away, throwing them
aside. Papa inhales deeply, reclaiming the snakes with a
sickening glee.

PAPA
(Whispering)
She's busy dying. Now, why don't
you join your Papa?

Andrea rises, determination igniting her spirit.

ANDREA
(Firmly)
I can't and won't do that. There's
no way.

PHILIP
(Cruelly amused)
No saving him. You can't go back.

Andrea glances back at Papa, who steps forward, dragging his
feet through the dirt.

ANDREA
(Pleading)
Papa, why don't you come with me?

Papa shuffles closer, his voice dripping with mock
tenderness.

PAPA
I can do that.

PHILIP
(Interjecting)
You will eventually end up just
like Papa. But for now, we need you
to become well.

As she bolts from the graveyard, panic surges through Andrea, her heart pounding.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

Andrea races up the steps of an old Cathedral from earlier, breathless.

She looks up and sees Carson on a mountain.

CARSON (O.S.)
Run, Andrea, run as fast as you
can. The dead can catch you, then
so can your old man.

Papa follows closely behind, his twisted smile revealing teeth made of tiny skeletons.

ANDREA
(Desperate)
Come on, Papa! You're sick. Don't
you remember how I took care of
you?

She halts on the Cathedral steps, the weight of her plea hanging in the air.

PAPA
(Laughing darkly)
Do you think this measly Cathedral
will save you? I'm undead, not
unholy.

Andrea shakes her head, determination hardening her resolve.

ANDREA
(Resolutely)
I know you, Papa.

Andrea stands on the steps, fear and determination warring within her. She glances back at the graveyard, where shadows seem to loom larger, whispering dark promises.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(Defiantly)
I won't let this be the end.

With newfound resolve, Andrea steps forward, ready to confront her past, her family, and the haunting darkness that threatens to consume her.

Rain pours down, creating puddles that reflect the darkening sky. Andrea stumbles backward as Papa lunges at her, falling hard on the wet ground.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(frantically)
No, Papa! Please, try to remember me!

Papa hovers above her, eyes wide and unrecognizing, teeth sharpened like daggers.

PAPA
(with a twisted grin)
What's funny is you can't reason with the unwell, Andrea.

He opens his mouth wide, sucking in a deep breath. Andrea's face is caught in his gaping maw, and her features blur.

ANDREA
(struggling)
No! It's me, your daughter! You know me!

Her face becomes more distorted, and she reaches out, desperate.

PAPA
(darkly)
You could always be a part of me.

The rain intensifies, causing steam to rise from Papa's body as if he's smoking from the inside. He rolls off of her, gasping as he looks down at himself.

ANDREA
(confused and terrified)
What is happening to you?

The Angel Statue appears, extending a hand toward her, her face stern yet compassionate.

ANGEL STATUE
Come now, my child, into the light.
Let's get you out of here.

Andrea shakes her head defiantly, scrambling to her feet.

ANDREA
Not without my Papa!

The Angel Statue, firm but gentle, grips her arm.

PAPA
 (mocking)
 You can't defeat the undead, little girl. I already died once.

Two other Angel Statues appear, armed with super soakers filled with holy water.

ANGEL STATUE
 (with determination)
 We'll see about that. The power of holy water!

They spray Papa, who hisses and smokes more, his left leg bursting into flames.

PAPA
 (in agony)
 You're all fools!

ANGEL STATUE
 That should hold you for now. You should have stayed dead.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

Andrea finds herself seated in the pews, trembling. The Angel Statue sits across from her, eyes narrowing.

ANGEL STATUE
 That was quite a foolish move.

ANDREA
 (defiantly)
 You sacrifice for your family. Isn't that what you're supposed to do?

The Angel Statue studies her, a hint of admiration creeping into his gaze.

ANGEL STATUE
 You feel a bit warm. Why don't I give you a little something for that?

Suddenly, Andrea is at the altar, her head held under holy water. Smoke billows up, rising like a cloud.

ANGEL STATUE (CONT'D)
 We have to exercise a little of the death out of you.

Andrea struggles, her head bobbing above the surface as she gasps for air.

ANDREA
(choking)
I can't breathe!

SURGERON (O.S.)
We're losing her.

ANDREA
(choking)
Huh?

She coughs violently, expelling a torrent of black mold into the water.

ANGEL STATUE
That's it, my child! Let the
deathly thoughts leave you.

ANDREA
(voice strained)
What the hell is this?

ANGEL STATUE
A journey through madness.

Andrea's vision blurs, panic swelling inside her.

ANDREA
(faltering)
What happens after we die? I think
I'm going to find out.

The Angel Statue stays calm, reassuring her.

ANGEL STATUE
We are detoxing your sense of
death.

Andrea kneels, her body trembling.

ANDREA
I feel so much pain. Why haven't
the monsters infected you yet?

The Angel Statue nods thoughtfully.

ANGEL STATUE
We have protections in place.

SURGEON (O.S.)
Pulse rate returning to normal.

Andrea looks around, confused about the nose.

INT. CATHEDRAL HALLWAY - DAY

Andrea walks cautiously down a long, dimly lit hallway, the walls lined with closed doors. The Angel Statue walks beside her, its expression severe but serene.

ANDREA
(curious)
Are these rooms filled with people?

ANGEL STATUE
(shaking his head)
Not exactly. Each of these rooms is a sanctuary of the Refuge family lineage.

Andrea's eyes widen with a mix of excitement and apprehension.

ANDREA
I guess I'll have to put something about my dad here.

The Angel Statue nods, his gaze steady.

ANGEL STATUE
You just acknowledged that your family may be gone.

Andrea's expression falters. She shakes her head, covering her eyes as tears threaten to spill.

ANDREA
I'm not sure about that. I just...
I don't want to forget them.

The Angel Statue gently taps her shoulder, directing her attention to a room with pictures of various families.

ANGEL STATUE
Your mind creates the best pictures.

Andrea takes a step closer, her voice barely above a whisper.

ANDREA
Sometimes, they tried to make me forget in this place I remember.

The "Get me to forget" echo resonates, and Andrea looks around nervously.

ANGEL STATUE

Fear not, my child. Nobody can enter this room. It's very safe. This sanctuary is open to every human. If any monsters dare step foot here, our squad will take them out.

Andrea gulps, her anxiety palpable.

ANDREA

I hope to God you're right.

As they continue down the hallway, the light dims ominously.

ANGEL STATUE

The darkness helps you sleep better.

Andrea inhales deeply, her nerves flaring.

ANDREA

I don't know... it's making me nervous.

The Angel Statue nods, understanding.

ANGEL STATUE

Even in a town filled with magic and rules, there's no changing the past.

ANDREA

That's what this place represents for me.

The Angel Statue pauses, his expression grave.

ANGEL STATUE

If you try to change the past, things can get uglier.

Andrea exhales heavily, feeling the weight of his words. The Angel Statue begins to rub her back, offering comfort.

ANDREA

(softly)
That feels good.

ANGEL STATUE

Are you sleepy? You can rest for a bit. You'll feel better when you wake up.

FADE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

Bacon sizzles in a frying pan. Papa (regular) hums a tune as he flips the bacon.

PAPA

(cheerfully)

Andrea! It's time for breakfast!

END FLASHBACK

INT. CATHEDRAL BEDROOM - PRESENT

Andrea jolts awake, excitement flooding her face. Suddenly, a red blinking light flashes ominously. Panic sets in as she realizes she's still in the Cathedral. She carefully swings her legs out of bed.

INT. CATHEDRAL HALLWAY - DAY

The lights flicker overhead, casting eerie shadows. All the doors are slightly ajar, creating an unsettling atmosphere.

PAPA (O.S.)

Aren't you hungry, my dear?

Andrea inches her way down the hallway, heart racing.

ANDREA

I have to be careful not to catch a case of death again.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

Andrea bursts into the main church area. She sees the Angel Statue hunched over a vat of holy water, but there's something off - it's head is covered in black mold.

ANGEL STATUE

(turning slowly)

Why don't you come a little closer?

Andrea shakes her head vigorously, dread creeping in.

ANDREA
I can't do that.

The Angel Statue faces her, its features grotesquely hollowed out, its eyes sunken, its nose crooked, its skin burned.

ANGEL STATUE
(grinning)
I've caught a case of death. It's
not so bad once you try it.

Andrea stumbles back, horror flooding her senses. She glances around—the holy water is black, and the church is enveloped in mold.

ANDREA
(voice trembling)
Stay back.

ANGEL STATUE
Death is better because it's final.
You even forget about your
mistakes.

Suddenly, the Angel Statue lunges toward her. Andrea gasps.

ANDREA
I'll take that trip home now!

The Angel Statue's teeth gleam—a horrific smile.

ANGEL STATUE
It's too late for that.

Andrea spins around, only to find Papa blocking her path.

PAPA
(playfully)
I love hide-and-peek. Now, it's
time to seek your death.

Andrea screams in desperation.

ANDREA
This isn't what I wanted!

Andrea finds herself cornered. Philip stands by the Cathedral door, watching.

PHILIP
I was wondering why you came here.

Andrea's eyes widen.

ANDREA
You can stop all this!

The Angel Statue and Papa advance menacingly.

PHILIP
(shrugging)
I can't control wild animals. I'm
trying to control you, to get you
back to living in reality.

Andrea glowers at him.

ANDREA
You're just a nuisance.

PHILIP
I never said to interact with your
dead father.

Papa grins wider.

PAPA
It's time for dinner!

ANGEL STATUE
(grinning)
This is going to make an exciting
meal.

Both the Angel Statue and Papa lunge toward Andrea. She
closes her eyes, bracing for impact.

ANDREA
(whispering)
There's no place like home...

PHILIP
(coldly)
I'm not the wizard, and this isn't
Oz. Goodbye, Andrea.

The Angel Statue and Papa collide in a grotesque struggle,
each biting at the other's face, blood squirting everywhere.

ANDREA
(horrified)
Jesus.

Philip turns to her, unfazed.

PHILIP
Let's get you back to the facility.

Andrea glares at him, anger bubbling to the surface.

ANDREA
Is the black ooze flammable?

Determined, she grabs a candle from a nearby altar and lights the ooze.

PHILIP
(shouting)
Andrea. No! This is not how we act.

The Cathedral ignites in flames, consuming everything in a brilliant, terrifying blaze.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

The sun is bright, but an ominous energy fills the air. Andrea bursts through the church doors, her heart pounding. She rolls on the ground as the SOUND OF SHATTERING GLASS echoes behind her, showering the area.

ANDREA
I'm ready to go home.

She gasps for air, relief washing over her. Philip stands inside the Cathedral with a smirk as he snaps his fingers. Suddenly, Sentinels swarm in, grabbing Andrea and restraining her on a gurney.

PHILIP
Not home, you can never return, but
you can be somewhere safe. So we
can study you.

Andrea struggles, thrashing around on the gurney.

ANDREA
Let me go! I want to see Mama!

PHILIP
I gave you a chance.

In a sudden burst of energy, Andrea breaks free from the gurney and punches the nearest Sentinel. The suit staggers back, but another grabs her arms.

SENTINEL
She's got much fight in her.

PHILIP
Did you do what I asked?

Fueled by desperation, Andrea continues hitting the Sentinel on the ground.

ANDREA
This isn't part of the deal!

Philip watches a mix of annoyance and amusement on his face.

PHILIP
Finish the job.

One of the Sentinels produces a large syringe, its contents gleaming menacingly.

SENTINEL TWO
This should do the trick.

He injects the syringe into Andrea's neck. She gasps, feeling the sharp sting.

ANDREA
I will find every one of you. I
will destroy this town!

PHILIP
I can't stand angry humanity.

Andrea stumbles, tripping over a rock and falling to the ground with a loud SPLAT. A Sentinel walks over.

SENTINEL
She's gone, sir.

PHILIP
I can see that. Take her. I want
her studied. This can never happen
again.

SENTINEL
You got it, sir.

INT. BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

The scene shifts to black and white. A young Andrea (14) stands before a mirror, sharp scissors glinting in her hand.

ANDREA
I'll show them. They can't control
me.

Determined, she raises the scissors above her head, rapidly moving them towards her stomach.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BODY ROOM - DAY

Andrea wakes up abruptly, her body strapped to a gurney. Confusion fills her eyes as she realizes where she is.

ANDREA

What is wrong with this place?

She quickly loosens the straps and rolls off the gurney, landing on the cold floor with a thud. As she stands, her eyes widen at the horrifying sight around her—body parts scattered across the room.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Oh God...

She covers her mouth to stifle a wave of nausea.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Nope.

Suddenly, she loses her battle with her stomach and vomits all over the floor, her sick splattering against a collection of detached eyeballs.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

The horror...

Sentinels enter, chatting casually.

SENTINEL ONE

This is where I put her.

Sentinel Two scans the room. Confusion is evident on his face.

SENTINEL TWO

Are you sure? Remember, last time you mixed up the rooms.

Andrea crouches in a corner, attempting to make herself as small as possible. She holds her breath, hoping they won't notice her.

SENTINEL ONE

This time, I put her in here.

Sentinel Two looks at the empty gurney.

SENTINEL TWO

She isn't here unless she got up on
two legs and moved out after death.

Another Sentinel enters, dragging a frozen dead body behind
him.

SENTINEL THREE

This is my room. Did you need
something?

Sentinel One and Two exchange glances, both looking uneasy.

SENTINEL TWO

Nope. It's just the wrong room.

SENTINEL ONE

My bad.

Sentinel One and Two exits, leaving Sentinel Three alone with
the body. As he examines it, Andrea shifts slightly, making a
noise that echoes ominously.

SENTINEL THREE

That's what I forgot.

Sentinel Three turns, looking around.

As soon as it leaves, Andrea takes a deep breath, shaking off
the nauseous feeling, and quietly staggers out of the room.

INT. FREEZER ROOM - DAY

In a stark, cold room with frozen jars filled with body
parts, Philip stands impatiently with the Sentinels.

PHILIP

Where is she?

Sentinel One looks around, his face pale.

SENTINEL ONE

I think I misplaced her.

PHILIP

You filled the syringe full,
correct?

Suddenly, a LOUD SNAP echoes through the room.

INT. MEDICAL ROOM - DAY

Philip is now dressed sharply in a suit. The Sentinels have transformed into DOCTORS, and their demeanor is more serious.

One of the doctors nervously rubs the back of his head.

DOCTOR 1
Three-fourths.

Philip rubs his temples, stress etched on his face.

PHILIP
The goal is to knock her out long enough so she doesn't harm herself or others. Three-fourths will only knock her out for an hour or two.

The doctor looks concerned.

DOCTOR 2
I was worried the full syringe would kill her.

Philip's frustration boils over.

PHILIP
Find Andrea! I want to see if we can fix her. If she was asleep long enough, we could access her brain, rewire her, and ensure she is not a threat.

The doctor's hands tremble.

DOCTOR 1
This is dangerous, sir. I worry we are making her more dangerous.

Philip's anger flares.

PHILIP
We are making her whole! Somewhere, her childhood got messed up. We can fix her. She blew up a church!

He picks up a jar and hurls it against the wall, causing it to shatter.

DOCTOR 2
She couldn't have gone far.

PHILIP
I would think not. She's killing
the medical staff!

DOCTOR 1
We'll find her.

Philip's eyes narrow, his tone sharp.

PHILIP
What kind of look is that for our
highly-rated hospital? We'll be the
first hospital to rewire someone's
brain physically.

INT. MEDICAL ROOM - DAY

The door creaks slightly ajar. Andrea's eyes peek through, filled with fear and resolve. Philip's hands morph into claws, a chilling transformation.

SENTINEL ONE
We will kill her.

Philip's eyes glow yellow, his voice a low snarl.

PHILIP
Excellent.

EXT. MEDICAL LOBBY - DAY

Andrea races through the lobby, glancing over her shoulder as the sounds of chaos erupt behind her.

ANDREA
I'm going to be sick again.

She swallows hard, forcing herself to stay focused.

Rushing towards an EXIT DOOR with a latch, she opens it.

ALARM (O.C.)
Escapee in progress!

A SIREN blares, echoing throughout the hallways.

SENTINEL (O.C.)
That's got to be her!

With a final burst of adrenaline, Andrea bolts.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - DAY

Andrea sprints down the stairwell, hearing the door at the top swing open.

SENTINEL TWO (O.S.)
You remember what the boss said!

She races down the stairs, her heart pounding, and reaches the bottom only to find the exit door LOCKED.

ANDREA
Oh shit! What do I do?

Panic sets in as she spins around. In a corner, she spots a severed arm, freshly cut, its long fingernails glistening.

She reaches for it with trembling hands, trying to steady her shaking.

Footsteps echo closer. They're closing in.

Andrea touches a finger, using the fingernail to unlock the door. It unlocks. She runs out.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

A harsh, flickering light cuts through the parking garage's dimness. Andrea walks cautiously toward the light, her footsteps echoing in the eerie silence.

A SHADOW lurks behind her, creeping closer, its presence ominous. Suddenly, it latches onto her shoulder.

ANDREA
(whirling around, alarmed)
Get off of me, you horrid wrench!

She spins to face the SHADOW, revealing Mama grotesquely transformed, her body a patchwork of mismatched body parts.

MAMA
(in a soft, haunting tone)
It's me, sweetheart. You're safe.

Andrea stumbles backward, fear etched on her face.

ANDREA
(voice trembling)
Mama? What did they do to you?

Mama looks away, shame washing over her.

MAMA
 (distant, pained)
 My beauty is gone. They performed
 experiments on me.

The faint sound of FOOTSTEPS grows louder. Andrea glances over her shoulder to see a group of Sentinels advancing behind her.

ANDREA
 (sorrowful)
 I'm sorry.

With a mechanical movement, Mama gently extends her aluminum skeleton arm to feel Andrea's face.

MAMA
 There, there, sweetheart.

Andrea's heart races as she watches the Sentinels stop in their tracks, sensing Mama's unsettling power. Mama gives them a knowing look, nodding slightly. They retreat.

ANDREA
 (breathless)
 They're with you?

MAMA
 (with eerie calm)
 Philip said you wanted to see me.
 He was going to dissect you and put
 you back together.

As Mama steps into the light, Andrea recoils at the sight of her jagged stone legs, sharp and menacing.

ANDREA
 (voice rising in panic)
 No! I thought you were still you!

Mama laughs, the sound of a horrific symphony of angry hornets.

MAMA
 Oh, I am still me—just in a
 superior form. Isn't that
 important?

Andrea backs away instinctively as the Sentinels step closer.

ANDREA
 (firmly)
 Stay back!

Mama steps forward, her demeanor suddenly more assertive.

MAMA
(to the Sentinels)
I will take care of this.
(turns to Andrea, voice
soothing)
Sweetheart, we can make you
better—brilliant, wise, superior.

Andrea hesitates, battling conflicting emotions.

ANDREA
(wistful)
I want to go back to the way things
were.

Mama's impatience grows as she rubs her arms restlessly.

MAMA
Can't you see? When you get here,
the path is blocked. It's dark,
meaning there's no going back.

Andrea lowers her gaze, the weight of MAMA's words pressing down on her.

ANDREA
(softly)
If I could change the past...

Mama's eyes glisten with deep black tears, a reflection of her suffering.

MAMA
I can tell you're remorseful for
everything you did.

Mama latches onto Andrea's shoulder, her grip vice-like.

ANDREA
(winces)
That hurts.

MAMA
(apologetic but firm)
I'm sorry, sweetheart. It may be
initially uncomfortable, but you'll
get use to it.

Andrea struggles against the lock of her Mama's grip, feeling the oppressive weight of her transformation.

ANDREA
(pleading)
This isn't you, Mama!

Mama's laughter reverberates through the garage, menacing and filled with madness.

MAMA
Oh, it's more than just me. There
are many people in here.

Suddenly, Mama's legs lurch forward, thrashing dangerously close to Andrea.

ANDREA
(terrified)
Mama! What about all the good times
we had as a family?

Mama's expression twists in pain as she turns away as if the memories are a physical blow.

MAMA
Oh, I remember, all right. Yet,
they were able to cover up that
part of the brain.

ANDREA
I know part of you is still in
there!

Mama shakes her head, a chilling finality in her eyes.

MAMA
(coldly)
This is a new and improved Mama.
Nothing old, nothing about the
past. It's all gone.

In a moment of clarity, Andrea pulls a WHITE FLAG from her back pocket, holding it up.

SENTINEL
(mockingly)
She's finally giving up.

Mama loosens her grip, intrigued by the flag, and Andrea falls to the ground, rubbing her sore shoulder. Mama studies the flag, her expression shifting.

EXT. FIELD - FLASHBACK

Everything is BLACK AND WHITE. Mama, Papa, Jack, and Andrea stand together, looking at a brilliant FIREWORKS display shaped like a flag.

MAMA
(with joy)
Happy 4th of July!

ANDREA
(eyes wide)
There are so many shapes!

END FLASHBACK

INT. PARKING GARAGE - PRESENT

Mama's head spins, her eyes darting as if grappling with the memories.

MAMA
(voice shaking)
The old family? Wait...

Black blood oozes from her face, a horrific sight.

ANDREA
(hopeful)
Mama's remembering.

Mama looks around the garage, her expression flickering between recognition and despair.

MAMA
(urgent, panicked)
Get out of here while you have the chance. Leave me!

Andrea stands slowly, determination surging.

ANDREA
We can go together, Mama.

MAMA
(shouting)
Negative! They will kill you. I will turn on you. That's the way in Inception Heights. Now go!

Mama screams, a cacophony reverberating through the garage as Andrea claps her hands over her ears - the Sentinels surge toward Andrea.

ANDREA
(frantic)
Shit!

Andrea scrambles to her feet, dodging the outstretched hands of the Sentinels.

SENTINEL
(snarling)
I promise you, your old life will
be a thing of the past!

One of the Sentinels grabs Andrea, pulling her toward him.

ANDREA
(struggling)
Get off of me!

Suddenly, GUNSHOTS ring out, echoing in the enclosed space. Each shot hits a Sentinel with precise accuracy. Andrea kicks the one holding her, breaking free as another bullet strikes the assailant in the face.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(stunned)
Oh?

Mama stands in the light, her features twisted with fury and sorrow.

MAMA
(screaming)
Finish me, damn you! Finish me as
well!

A bullet pierces Mama's head, tearing through flesh and bone. She collapses to the ground, lifeless.

ANDREA
(screaming, heartbroken)
Mama? No! I'm sorry! I tried to fix
all this!

A GROUP OF MERCENARIES bursts through the garage entrance, clad in tactical gear, and with their weapons drawn. The GROUP LEADER, MAX REFUGE (30s, rugged, mustache, beard), strides forward, removing his helmet as his eyes lock onto Andrea.

MAX
(steadying his breath)
Identify yourself.

ANDREA
 (voice shaking)
 Please... don't shoot me.

Max raises his hand, signaling for his team to lower their weapons.

MAX
 I recognize you. Let's get you to safety.

ANDREA
 (urgent)
 I want out of here. Now!

EXT. MERCENARY HIDEOUT - DAY

A grassy field unfolds, surrounded by an imposing electrical fence with a WARNING: HIGH VOLTAGE sign flapping in the breeze. Two orange jumpsuits stand out against the green landscape: Max, a rugged mercenary in his 30s, and Andrea, a young woman with a fierce determination in her eyes.

MAX
 (leaning against the fence)
 Are you enjoying the food?

ANDREA
 (savoring a taco)
 It was my favorite growing up. It tastes like freedom.

Max extends his hand earnestly.

MAX
 I'm Max. But you can't just go there, Andrea. You're locked up for a reason. I'm trying to help you.

Andrea shakes her head, frustration mounting.

ANDREA
 (voice rising)
 Philip promised me a way home. He said—

MAX
 (interrupting)
 He lied! He wants to experiment on you! I've been there, trust me.

Andrea's expression shifts as she processes his words.

ANDREA

(sighing)

I wish I had known the bloody curse
this place was. I lost everything.

Max snaps his fingers, his intensity rising.

MAX

You caused this, but I can help you
fix it. Together, we can fight
against this place's savagery. We
can keep you here and make this
place, feel more peaceful.

ANDREA

(eyes narrowing)

Why don't you come with me?

Max nods, eyes fierce with determination.

MAX

(smiling)

Because we're home, but I need you
to fight Philip with me so we can
live in paradise. Make this our
paradise.

Andrea looks up, hoping to ignite in her eyes. Suddenly, with
a SNAP, a dilapidated barn materializes behind Max. He's now
clad in tactical gear: a bulletproof vest and camo pants.

ANDREA

(eyes widening)

You saved me.

INT. BARN - DAY

Inside the barn, the walls are lined with weapons.
Mercenaries practice shooting on a range, the crack of
gunfire echoing through the air as Andrea and Max walk by,
soaking in the intensity.

ANDREA

(grinning)

Quite the facility. Safety, at
least. Why not leave Inception
Heights for yourself? This is such
a haunted, deadly place.

Max looks solemn, his gaze distant.

MAX

Because we're scared, we don't want to lose each other. Only a few of us will make it to the other side. Then we will be at peace.

Andrea's expression softens as she processes his vulnerability.

ANDREA

(whispering)

I get it. It's better to have a family than anything. But I want to get out of here.

Max locks eyes with her, a flicker of admiration passing between them. Max then scratches his teeth. Andrea looks surprised. She was not expecting that. Max is bleeding from the mouth a bit.

MAX

That's it. We can do so much, but at the same time, so little. These guys—

(pauses, gesturing around)

—took me in and trained me when I was displaced.

ANDREA

(looking thoughtful)

Who are you?

MAX

(smirking)

I'm Max.

ANDREA

(earnest)

Can you train me, Max?

MAX

(raising an eyebrow)

Do you want to learn how to fight? Use weapons?

ANDREA

(serious)

There's not a good chance I'll get to waltz back home. Yes.

Max nods, resolve hardening in his eyes.

MAX

All right, rest. Your training begins in four hours. We can mutually benefit each other.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - DAY

Andrea holds a rifle, staring down the scope at a target. She pulls the trigger, but the recoil sends her flying backward into the wall.

ANDREA

(rubbing her shoulder)
Hmm. Maybe not.

INT. AXE THROWING ROOM - DAY

She stands in front of a target, a hefty axe in hand. She throws it with all her might, but the axe bounces off and flies straight back, landing inches from her face.

MAX

(grinning)
I take it that's something you don't want to experience again.

Andrea shakes her head, wide-eyed.

INT. SWORD ROOM - DAY

In a room lined with swords, Andrea runs up to Max, who's in a combat stance, sword drawn. The sound of metal clashing fills the air as their blades meet.

MAX

(leaning in)
You have an affinity for this.

ANDREA

(smiling)
This feels right.

They engage in an exhilarating sword fight, exchanging blows. Andrea takes a deep breath, her focus sharp. Max advances, stopping inches away from her ribs.

MAX

(serious tone)
Remember, in a sword fight, you can't rest. Your opponent will take advantage.

INT. RED ROOM - DAY

Max and Andrea sit in a room bathed in red light, a rhythmic humming filling the space like butterflies fluttering.

ANDREA
(voice quiet)
Can I make it through to get home?

Max looks at her, his expression grave.

MAX
No. It's hazardous. But I've made a decision. I'm willing to help you, and so will my men. So we can make this our home for good.

Andrea reaches out, running her fingers along Max's beard. A few golden strands come off in her hand.

ANDREA
(chuckling)
Strange.

MAX
(shrugging)
Sometimes I shed. It happens.

ANDREA
(teasing)
Thanks for the rescue. What time are we moving out?

MAX
(focused)
Let me get my people ready for the fight ahead.

INT. BARN - LATER

Andrea enters the barn, fully dressed, and sees mercenaries sprinting past her. The atmosphere is tense, filled with anticipation.

ANDREA
(playfully)
So, are you ready to suit up?

The men pause, exchanging glances. Max steps forward, his expression serious.

MAX
(gravely)
Once you do this, there's no
turning back.

ANDREA
(nods)
Understood.

Max surveys his team, all in tactical gear, bracing for what lies ahead.

MAX
Out there? It's the worst of the
worst. Creatures that will devour
you in seconds.

ANDREA
(with determination)
I appreciate your help.

Max looks down, his tone darkening.

MAX
A lot of us aren't coming back. But
we can help you leave.

Andrea shakes her head, the weight of the situation dawning on her.

ANDREA
I know this means you're all stuck
here.

MERCENARY
(firmly)
We've faced worse. We feel a duty
to protect those in need.

The other mercenaries nod in agreement, a show of solidarity.

ANDREA
(with resolve)
Excellent.

Max checks his gun, making sure it's locked and loaded.
Andrea grips her sword at her side.

MAX
(seriously)
One more thing—we need to destroy
the house to open the portal.

Andrea freezes, horror etched on her face.

ANDREA
Please, not Evilton Estates.

MAX
(softly)
Evilton Estates.

ANDREA
(voice trembling)
That's what started this mess.

Max meets her gaze, determination shining through.

MAX
It'll be fine. I'll be right here
with you.

Andrea fidgets nervously, a storm of thoughts swirling.

ANDREA
We got past his pets, but I have no
idea what's upstairs.

MERCENARY
(reassuringly)
That's where the main room is.
Destroy the main room, destroy the
house, and we leave this place.

Andrea looks at them, realization dawning.

ANDREA
(with regret)
How could I be so stupid? Philip
wasn't going to let me go. He
planned to use me and then kill me.

EXT. RIDGE - FANTASY

Andrea stands over a hill, Philip looming behind her like a dark shadow.

ANDREA
(tearfully)
You showed me, Papa.

PHILIP
(shakes his head)
You must have missed it. Your Mama
is buried next to your Papa.
Remember?

Andrea's eyes glisten with unshed tears.

ANDREA
Please - send me home.

She reaches out with desperate arms. Philip raises his rifle, the click of the gun echoing ominously.

PHILIP
You're not going home, but you
won't have to worry about here
anymore. I can fix you.

BAM! BAM! BAM! Three shots pierce the air, striking Andrea in the back. She gasps, stunned.

ANDREA
(whispers)
Damn.

She collapses to the ground, the darkness closing in.

END FANTASY

INT. BARN - PRESENT

Andrea wakes up screaming, panic flooding her senses.

MAX
(concerned)
What's the matter?

Andrea looks around, trembling.

ANDREA
(nervously)
Nothing - just my imagination.

MAX
(empathetically)
It happens to the best of us. This
place has a way of doing that.

Suddenly, the lights in the barn flicker, plunging them into darkness. The shutters slam shut.

ANDREA
(panicking)
What's happening?

RIPPING sounds echo around them as if something is growing—something monstrous.

MAX (O.S.)
It's so painful!

MERCENARY (O.S.)
We can't stop it!

Philip's voice booms ominously from the shadows.

PHILIP (O.S.)
Well, you will be dead soon.

ANDREA (O.S.)
(defiantly)
I'm going to kill you.

PHILIP (O.S.)
I won't kill you. I'll leave that
up to them. Or you give in.

ANDREA (O.S.)
They like me.

PHILIP (O.S.)
They can't control themselves.

ANDREA (O.S.)
(confused)
Why are you like this?

PHILIP (O.S.)
No human has survived the town of
darkness. That won't change now.
Its time.

The lights flicker again, and Andrea sees Max's golden hair
in the darkness.

ANDREA
Max? My old dog.

INT. YARD - FLASHBACK - DAY

The sun hangs high, casting a warm glow over the yard. A
GOLDEN LAB sits anxiously on the grass, ears drooping as TWO
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS approach, each wielding a muzzle.
Andrea, around eight years old, notices the commotion and
rushes toward her parents, her heart pounding.

ANDREA
(voice trembling)
What are they doing with Max?

Papa, a sturdy man with a gentle demeanor, kneels to Andrea's
level, his eyes filled with compassion and regret.

PAPA
 (somberly)
 Andrea, they're taking him away...
 They're putting him down.

Andrea's face crumbles, tears brimming in her eyes.

ANDREA
 Why? He's never hurt anyone!

Warm yet firm, Mama crouches beside them, brushing a loose strand of hair behind Andrea's ear.

MAMA
 He bit someone, sweetheart. He was
 scared.

Andrea's lips quiver, and she wipes her cheeks with her tiny hands, struggling to comprehend.

ANDREA
 (sobbing)
 But he was my friend!

Papa pulls her into a tight embrace, his voice soothing but filled with the weight of reality.

PAPA
 I know, pumpkin. But we can get you
 a rabbit instead.

Andrea's gaze falls to the ground, the words barely reaching her through the fog of her sadness.

ANDREA
 But... Max is special.

The officers lead Max away, his tail between his legs, and Andrea's heart breaks as she watches him vanish into the vehicle.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BARN - DAY

Lights flicker erratically, casting ghostly shadows on the wooden walls. Andrea stands in the center, breathing heavily. She glances around, the memories flooding her mind, and then—

From the corner of the room, a massive, fully-grown GOLDEN WEREWOLF named Max steps into the chaotic light, his eyes piercing through the darkness.

The other MERCENARIES, too, have transformed into fierce beasts. They snarl, their eyes glinting in the dim light.

MAX
 (grinning menacingly)
 Run as fast as you can, little
 girl. You'll never outrun us.

Panic grips Andrea as she stumbles, desperately searching for an exit. The barn feels like a twisted maze, every flickering light amplifying her fear.

MERCENARY
 (taunting)
 You know werewolves have night
 vision, right?

Andrea's breath quickens, heart racing as she pushes through the chaos, dodging the swirling shadows and trying to find a way out.

ANDREA
 (voice strained)
 Come on, where is it?

The lights flash brighter, overwhelming her senses. She fumbles toward the exit, each step heavier than the last.

EXT. BARNYARD - DAY

Bursting through the barn doors, Andrea stumbles into the sunlight. Her eyes adjust momentarily, but she finally takes a deep, refreshing breath.

ANDREA
 (relieved)
 I'm safe...

But her relief is short-lived. Max crashes through the door, tackling her to the ground with his robust frame and pinning her down.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
 (looking up, incredulous)
 So Mama and Papa didn't put you
 down, Max? Did you escape here?

Her voice trembles with disbelief, memories of love and loyalty battling against the beast before her.

MAX
(voice low, filled with
rage)
I found this portal.

Andrea, filled with desperation, instinctively raises her hands, blocking her face.

ANDREA
(panicking)
This world turns everything into
monsters. Can't you help me?

Max growls, frustration radiating from his powerful body.

MAX
(eyes blazing)
You left me to die, little girl!
You left me with nothing!

Her heart aches at his words, the guilt flooding back. She gathers her resolve, pushing against the weight of his body.

ANDREA
(breathlessly)
That wasn't my choice! Get a hold
of yourself. It was Mama and Papa!

Max shakes his head, drool dripping from his jaws, and a haunting howl escapes his lips, echoing in the open air.

MAX
(voice trembling with
hunger)
You could have fought for me! It
died for me! You could have
sacrificed yourself in my place!

Andrea feels a pang of pain at his accusations. She scrambles back, trying to crawl away, her mind racing.

ANDREA
(sternly)
You were an animal! You still are!
Look at you!

Max howls again, a chilling sound that reverberates in the air. His hunger is palpable, and Andrea feels fear and anger.

MAX
(snarling)
I feel this hunger, Andrea! I want
more food in my system!

Desperately, she inches toward a nearby fence, but Max lunges forward, dragging her back quickly.

ANDREA
(screaming)
I don't deserve to die!

Max's teeth sink into her leg, and pain shoots through her body, making her scream. She writhes beneath him, instinctively fighting back.

MAX
(coldly)
It's over. If I don't eat you, the others will.

Max lunges forward, sharp teeth aimed at her eyes. In a desperate moment, Andrea grabs a WOOD SPLINTER from the ground and thrusts it toward Max's eye.

ANDREA
(defiantly)
Bad dog!

The splinter pierces Max's brain, and a spray of blood erupts, splattering Andrea's face. Time seems to freeze as Max's body goes rigid, shock coursing through him.

FLASH. Max appears in an orange jumpsuit, a memory surfacing in Andrea's mind.

MAX
(fading voice)
It wasn't me, but Philip you were supposed to kill.

With a surge of adrenaline, Andrea kicks Max off her, using all her strength to shove him aside. She stumbles to her feet, bleeding from her leg, each step a struggle.

ANDREA
(grimacing)
Aargh, that bite -

Max collapses, rolling onto his side. His tongue lolls out, and the curse lifts, revealing his human form beneath the monstrous exterior. He turns to dust, leaving behind only memories.

The MERCENARIES revert to their human forms, confusion etched on their faces.

MERCENARY
 (with a heavy heart)
 We can't help you.

ANDREA
 (snarling)
 Fuck off!

In a daze, Andrea drags herself away, gripping her bleeding leg. She stumbles through the grass, the weight of exhaustion pulling her down. Eventually, she finds herself back on the BRICK ROAD, sitting by the town's side, overwhelmed.

EXT. BRICK ROAD - DAY

Andrea stands in the middle of a desolate brick road, dazed, her leg bleeding profusely. Shadows flicker around her, and suddenly, Dark Jack materializes before her, a ghostly figure.

DARK JACK
 (softly)
 'Drea? 'Drea?

Andrea blinks, stunned, taking a moment to process.

ANDREA
 (voice trembling)
 How are you still alive? You can't
 be. Did Philip bring you back?

Dark Jack shakes his head, a hint of sorrow in his eyes.

DARK JACK
 I'm not alive. You summoned my
 spirit. It's complicated.

Andrea winces, shifting uncomfortably as more blood trickles from her leg.

ANDREA
 I don't get to go home after all.

She closes her eyes, leaning over as memories begin.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Two SURGEONS stand over Andrea's still body, their expressions grim as they work frantically.

ANDREA
 I don't get to go home after all.

SURGEON
(frantically)
We're still losing her! Stay with
us. Come on. This is real.

SURGEON TWO
(looking closely)
She's fighting the treatment.

The first surgeon shakes his head, determination in his eyes.

SURGEON
No, I feel a blockage. I can
release it!

END FLASHBACK

INT. BRICK ROAD - PRESENT

Dark Jack slaps Andrea's face, snapping her to reality.

ANDREA
(rubbing her cheek)
I felt that hit.

DARK JACK
(urgently)
There's so much to fight for,
'Drea.

Andrea looks around, her gaze drawn to birds soaring above. A faint smile crosses her lips.

ANDREA
I don't have to worry or fight
anymore.

Dark Jack shakes his head, his expression serious.

DARK JACK
Do you remember how you used to
slice and dice your dolls, mixing
and matching them?

Andrea chuckles softly despite the situation, the memory warming her.

ANDREA
That's a fun memory.

DARK JACK
(intently)
Fight like you want it.

Andrea closes her eyes again, a deep breath escaping.

ANDREA
Everything is lost.

She slumps over, her strength fading.

DARK JACK
(urgent)
Philip is trying to separate us.
Your brother is still here. I
promise I'm still in your head.

EXT. BRICK ROAD - DAY

Andrea's eyes snap open, fire igniting within them. She grips Dark Jack's arm, determination surging through her.

ANDREA
I have to find my brother!

But suddenly, darkness washes over her, and she blacks out. Dark Jack, filled with urgency, lifts Andrea into his arms, carrying her toward Inception Heights.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Andrea awakens in a dimly lit classroom, lying atop a desk. Surgery scars mark her arms and legs. She glances around, confusion painting her features.

DARK JACK
(gently)
Easy now.

Andrea shakes her head, disbelief lingering.

ANDREA
You said you were just a
projection.

Dark Jack meets her gaze, shaking his head slowly.

DARK JACK
I'll only survive for a little
longer.

Andrea grits her teeth, pushing herself to her feet and testing her wounds.

ANDREA
It's time for me to get Jack.

DARK JACK
(anxious)
You ought to open that portal
first. It can lure Philip out.

Andrea stretches, determination fueling her movements.

ANDREA
Philip won't let me go.

Dark Jack's form flickers, a sign of his fading strength.

DARK JACK
You won't let your brother go.

Andrea's face hardens, her resolve firm.

ANDREA
This isn't going to be easy.

Dark Jack shivers, losing more color.

DARK JACK
The stronger you become, the less
I'm needed.

Andrea ponders for a moment, a glimmer of hope emerging.

ANDREA
Could I take my brother out of you?

Dark Jack's fading form grows weaker, his voice shaky.

DARK JACK
No.

Andrea reaches out, feeling the coolness of Dark Jack's hand.

ANDREA
Can we extend your time and bring
Jack here?

Dark Jack lies down, a resigned look on his face.

DARK JACK
Let me go 'Drea.

Andrea, refusing to accept this, takes a pair of scissors
from the desk and lies down beside it.

ANDREA
I want to see my brother if I have
to will him here.

Dark Jack's form begins to flicker more intensely.

DARK JACK
(weakly)
The children have more control.
They can make him appear.

Andrea's eyes light up with determination.

ANDREA
So I don't have to cut myself.

Dark Jack begins to fade, urgency creeping into his voice.

DARK JACK
We will be enemies when I see you
again.

Dark Jack disappears completely, leaving Andrea alone in the classroom. She struggles to her feet, adrenaline fueling her resolve.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Andrea stumbles into a bright yet eerie playground, her gaze drifting over the swings and slides. A group of CHILDREN stops their play, eyes wide with curiosity and suspicion.

CHILDREN
(whispering)
What is it?

Andrea steps forward, her voice trembling but resolute.

ANDREA
I wish to speak with my brother.

The children huddle together, exchanging doubting glances.

CHILDREN
You hurt us earlier. Why should we
help you?

Andrea takes a breath, considering her words carefully.

ANDREA
I'm willing to destroy the
Executioner. Free you all.

The children murmur among themselves, their whispers echoing in the air.

CHILDREN

The Executioner can never be
killed. The last person who tried -
was killed instantly.

Andrea straightens, a fierce determination in her eyes.

ANDREA

I stand before you, a survivor of
trauma. I can outwit and kill
Philip and bring him to his knees.

The Children continue to whisper, their resolve wavering.

CHILDREN

We want to play all day. We can
never grow old. That's all we want.

ANDREA

Let me speak to my brother.

The Children nod slowly, hesitantly.

CHILDREN

I call upon thee, Jack Refuge. Come
to life!

A thick mist rises above the playground, transforming the sky
into a blood-orange hue. Lightning crackles, illuminating the
scene. Jack materializes from the fog, looking bewildered.

JACK

'Drea. I thought I died.

Andrea rushes to him, a mix of relief and sorrow.

ANDREA

You did. I feel responsible.

Jack shakes his head, a soft smile forming on his lips.

JACK

You couldn't have done that.

They move to a bench, the nostalgia heavy in the air.

ANDREA

I'm so glad I could see you and say
goodbye.

JACK

No. You're leaving?

Tears well up in Andrea's eyes.

ANDREA

I can't stay. I must kill the Executioner and then leave, or I'll become a monster.

Jack lowers his head, the weight of her words sinking in.

JACK

God. This playground looks so familiar. It's like the one we went to -

Andrea's smile brightens as she looks around.

ANDREA

Right by our house. There's the blue jungle gym.

With a pointed finger, the jungle gym shifts to a vivid blue.

JACK

The red swing set!

Jack gestures, and the swing set changes to a bright red.

ANDREA

And the piss slide.

Andrea points at the jungle gym's top, where a tube slide appears. Jack chuckles.

JACK

That was a great place to do it when you had to go.

Andrea laughs, a lightness in her heart.

ANDREA

This is such a wonderful feeling.

But Jack's demeanor turns serious.

JACK

Even without me, you can do good here. You're freeing everything from the enslavement by the Executioner.

Andrea's expression shifts, shadows creeping into her heart.

ANDREA

I wish there were a way to bring you back permanently.

Behind them looms a field darkened by shadows, a tunnel of darkness threatening to swallow everything.

JACK

You realize there's no going back to the past. But your present can be so much brighter.

Andrea looks down, uncertainty flickering in her eyes.

ANDREA

Without you, Jack, a big piece of me will be missing.

Jack gently holds her hand, their bond palpable.

JACK

I know 'Drea. Hold onto our memories. That's important.

Andrea ponders, her voice softening.

ANDREA

Do you disappear?

Jack laughs lightly, his eyes sparkling.

JACK

Are you trying to get rid of me that easily?

Andrea stands, a newfound determination sparking within her.

ANDREA

I was wondering if I could use you.

Jack cracks his neck, intrigued.

JACK

What do you have in mind?

Andrea grins mischievously.

ANDREA

Do you have any flight ability?

Jack tilts his head, a playful smirk crossing his face.

JACK

Like a superhero?

Andrea nods, excitement bubbling.

ANDREA

Dark Jack.

Jack's eyes widen, realization dawning.

JACK

Hmm...

EXT. HOUSE ROOF - DAY

Jack sweeps Andrea into the air, soaring to the roof of their childhood home. Andrea surveys the area below, determination etched on her face.

ANDREA

Right there, that's perfect.

Jack gently sets her down.

JACK

You got it from here?

Andrea hesitates, glancing at him.

ANDREA

Not exactly. Stay with me a little longer.

Three GARGOYLE figures perched on the ledges turn their attention to Andrea.

GARGOYLE

Feeding time, finally.

Andrea steels herself.

ANDREA

It's time for me to go home.

GARGOYLE TWO

Fast food.

The second Gargoyle rushes at Andrea. She expertly flips him over her head, delivering a powerful punch to his chest. His head pops off, landing in the abyss. Jack stares wide-eyed.

JACK

You've learned some new moves.

ANDREA

I ran into that old dog of ours. He taught me a few things.

Without missing a beat, Jack hurls a shard of glass into the third Gargoyle's neck, its head rolling away into darkness.

JACK

The children wanted me to say thank you.

The last Gargoyle, now enraged, snarls.

GARGOYLE

This is unacceptable.

Andrea and Jack encircle the remaining Gargoyle, a fierce energy crackling between them.

ANDREA

No, you're going to let us go.

Suddenly, Jack begins to fade.

JACK

Thanks for the last adventure, 'Drea.

Andrea looks at him, tears glimmering in her eyes.

ANDREA

Goodbye, Jack. Thanks for the memories.

As Jack disappears, the Gargoyle laughs mockingly.

GARGOYLE

You are all alone in an unfamiliar place.

Andrea glares, her determination solidifying.

ANDREA

I have survived.

The Gargoyle charges at her, hunger driving it forward.

GARGOYLE

Prepare to meet your doom.

Andrea braces herself as the Gargoyle rushes at her.

ANDREA

This is your last chance.

GARGOYLE

You cannot see. There is nothing you can do.

Andrea spins around, grabbing the Gargoyle's claws and pressing her hands into them.

ANDREA
I'm trying to be kind.

GARGOYLE
No kindness. You lose.

With a fierce determination, Andrea presses harder. The Gargoyle sinks to one knee, shaking.

ANDREA
There's nothing wrong with reaching out for help.

GARGOYLE
I refuse.

ANDREA
Then you will be destroyed.

The Gargoyle trembles, its instincts battling against Andrea's resolve.

GARGOYLE
It is in my nature to feed.

With a surge of strength, Andrea lifts the Gargoyle above her head.

ANDREA
I gave you a chance at life.

With one swift motion, she hurls the Gargoyle over the edge. It crashes down, shattering into countless pieces.

Andrea scans the roof frantically, searching for an escape.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
Eureka, a way back home!

She spots a hatch and leaps down into it.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway is dimly lit, shadows creeping along the walls. Andrea moves cautiously toward her bedroom. Each creak of the floor sends shivers down her spine. She grips the door handle tightly, taking a deep breath.

With a slow turn of the handle, she opens the door-

BOOM!

An explosion throws her back, rolling her down the stairs. The hallway erupts in chaos.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

As she bursts through the door, the house EXPLODES behind her, sending her sprawling onto the street. Dazed, she shakes off the debris and sees a swirling PORTAL forming amid the destruction.

ANDREA

It's over.

Dark Jack, looming and sinister, drops Philip in front of Andrea. Philip's eyes glint with malice as he flicks his wrist, sending Andrea flying backward but somehow landing on her feet.

PHILIP

I'm not going to let you go home.
You can't. But I can make you well.

His eyes glow yellow, and he HOWLS.

ANDREA

Get out of my way.

Philip lets out a chilling laugh. Dark Jack swoops in, effortlessly lifting Andrea into the air.

DARK JACK

Back off, Philip. She's mine.

PHILIP

Do not fail me. Capture her. Bring
her body back to me.

EXT. INCEPTION HEIGHTS TOWN CENTER - DAY

Dark Jack lands with a thud, dropping Andrea to the ground. The air is tense as GARGOYLES, ZOMBIES, and GIGANTIC INSECTS gather, their eyes glinting with hunger.

DARK JACK

I know you are all starving.

The crowd erupts in a cacophony of cheers, their voices echoing like a distorted hospital machine.

ANDREA
Such horrid noise.

Dark Jack steps forward, addressing the crowd.

DARK JACK
She challenged me to a duel.

The crowd goes silent. Andrea seizes the moment.

ANDREA
I'll take all of you on.

The crowd growls in response, sounding like nails scraping against a chalkboard. Andrea covers her ears.

DARK JACK
I have decided to accept the challenge. Once I defeat her, we can feast on her flesh once and for all.

Excitement ripples through the crowd, their anticipation palpable.

ANDREA
If I win, you let me go home.

Dark Jack snickers, dismissive.

DARK JACK
Which won't happen.

Andrea glares at him, determination igniting within her.

ANDREA
Don't be so sure.

Dark Jack crosses his arms, smirking.

DARK JACK
What are the rules for the duel?

Andrea pulls out a rifle with a flick of her wrist, firing a shot into the air.

ANDREA
Max taught me a few things. I've learned a lot.

A throwing axe materializes in her hand in the blink of an eye. She hurls it toward Dark Jack with all her might.

The axe buries itself in Dark Jack's side, and bullet holes blossom across his body. He stumbles, momentarily stunned.

DARK JACK
You defeated me -

Andrea stands tall with a triumphant smile.

ANDREA
I'm going home.

In a rage, Dark Jack pulls out the axe, his eyes narrowing.

DARK JACK
Yet I'm already dead. You killed me
by accident three months ago.

INT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK

The screen is in BLACK AND WHITE, giving it a dreamlike quality. Jack lies motionless on the ground, his body limp. Andrea rushes over, panic etched on her face.

ANDREA
(kneeling beside Jack,
shaking him gently)
Jack! Come on, please! You have to
be alive!

She presses her hands against his chest, desperately willing him to respond—her heart races.

FLASH TO:

EXT. INCEPTION HEIGHTS TOWN CENTER - DAY

With a swift movement, he strikes Andrea in the side. Blood spills, and both of them collapse, breathless.

BEEP.

SURGERON (V.O.)
Come on. I can't lose another one.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

The flattering sound of the machine fills the air. The surgeons exchange panicked glances.

SURGEON
 (grimly)
 Time of death 0-

EXT. YARD - FANTASY

Andrea, stumbles around, gets her grip, and the yard comes into focus. Philip leaps in front of her.

PHILIP
 (laughing)
 I can't let you go. I can fix this.

END FANTASY

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

But suddenly, the machine beeps! A faint rhythm returns.

SURGEON TWO
 (in disbelief)
 She's breathing! It's a miracle!

SURGEON
 (incredulous)
 The treatment may be working.

SURGEON TWO
 (hopeful)
 Hopefully, she changes her ways. I hope Philip was right about this.

Two SURGEONS work frantically over Andrea's unconscious body.

SURGEON
 Third attempt to fix her.

SURGEON TWO
 Damn.

EXT. YARD - FANTASY

Andrea has a sword in her hand, her body badly bruised and bloody, as she glares at Philip.

PHILIP
 All you have to do, my dear, is to finish me. That's it, and you're out of here.

ANDREA

(angry)

It's over Philip. You can't hurt anyone else.

PHILIP

(claps hands)

When you wake up from surgery, I hope it's a success, and you're not so delusional.

Andrea swings her sword, and it touches Philip's neck. He whips it back unnaturally as if he is going to lose it.

SNAP.

Everything is frozen. Philip's head disconnects from his body, and he falls to the ground.

SNAP.

END FANTASY

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Suddenly, Andrea springs up from the table, panic in her eyes.

SURGERON

(relief)

You're alive. Oh, thank god.

(to Surgeon Two)

We need to grab Philip. It's important.

She grabs a scalpel and stabs one of the surgeons in the neck. He gasps, struggling for air.

ANDREA

I need a way out of this place.
It's evil.

She pulls the scalpel free and points it at the other surgeon, who raises his hands in surrender, retreating.

CUT TO:

EXT. INCEPTION HEIGHTS REHAB CLINIC - FLASHBACK

The large, circular building is peeling. The white paint has faded, revealing patches of gray concrete beneath.

Graffiti sprawls across the wall: "DARK JACK WAS HERE." The words seem to pulse with their own life in the dim light.

INT. INCEPTION HEIGHTS REHAB CLINIC - FLASHBACK

In a sterile, brightly lit room, Mama and Papa sit nervously across from DOCTOR Philip Evilton, a man in a lab coat with a clinical demeanor. His office is filled with strange instruments and papers, creating chaos amid the sterile environment.

MAMA

(voice trembling)

She killed my son. You have to do something.

PAPA

(rubbing his temples)

I hate to admit it, but my methods—the pills—aren't working. What security do you have here?

MAMA

She needs to be kept away. That dangerous side of her can't escape again.

PHILIP

(leaning forward, earnest)

We're implementing experimental treatments. There are no pills this time. We use surgery instead—a way to fix the brain chemistry.

PAPA

(frowning)

I don't love that idea. Sounds risky.

MAMA

Those pills only made things worse! They turned her into a monster.

PAPA

(sighing)

But the pills kept her... normal.

PHILIP

(firmly)

I assure you that this program can and will work. We've had success before.

EXT. YARD - PRESENT

The chaotic scene erupts as POLICE CARS screech to a halt. SIRENS blare, and FIRE AMBULANCES pulse with light, painting the night in red and blue. Officers pour out, guns drawn, their faces set in grim determination.

POLICEMAN
(shouting)
It's over! Drop the knife and put
your head on the ground!

Andrea stands at the center, blood dripping from her hands. In her grip is Philip's severed head, a gruesome trophy of her chaotic victory. A WOMAN screams nearby, crumpling to the ground in despair.

WOMAN
(crying)
My husband! Philip!

POLICEMAN
(urgently)
Andrea Refuge! Come with us—now!

Andrea shakes her head, disbelief mingling with defiance.

ANDREA
(softly, almost confused)
Huh?

The Police handcuff her, and she screams in protest.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
No! You don't understand!

The officers shake their heads in disgust, treating her as just another criminal.

EXT. YARD - ANDREA'S POV

Andrea's vision blurs as she gazes down at her hands, now splattered with blood. In her mind, shadows and outlines of grotesque creatures swirl around her, whispering threats and promises.

ANDREA
(to herself, resigned)
I guess I'm supposed to give up and
let you have me.

The shadows converge, wrapping around her like a suffocating blanket.

POLICE (O.S.)
Can you hear me, Andrea? Do you understand what is happening?

ANDREA (V.O.)
I terrorized a small town after escaping from the Inception Heights Rehab Clinic in Boulder.

The memories flood back. The chaos she wreaked. The destruction.

ANDREA (V.O.)
I took the head doctor at the institution hostage, and it ended tragically. His name was Philip Evilton.

Police shove her into a squad car, the metal clanking shut behind her. The darkness envelops her as the reality of her actions settles in.

ANDREA (V.O.)
I was the monster. They tried to reform me. A part of them knew I was dangerous. Yet Philip always insisted he could fix me—make me docile and less destructive.

The echo of his confidence rings hollow now.

ANDREA (V.O.)
It failed.

EXT. APARTMENT STAIRWAY - FLASHBACK

Mama stands at the top of the stairs, her back to Andrea, who looks up angrily and hurt.

ANDREA
I'm not a freak.

MAMA
(firmly, without turning)
You killed my favorite child.
You're a monster now.

ANDREA
(voice rising)
You need a little help with understanding me!

In a sudden burst of rage, Andrea shoves Mama down the stairs. Mama flies backward, hitting her head against the stair post. A sickening CRACK echoes in the silence.

INT. KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

The kitchen is warm and filled with the aroma of soup. Young Andrea, about 10, is serving her Papa, hunched over at the table.

ANDREA
(Concerned)
You're sick. You've got to eat.

Papa coughs, his eyes distant as if lost in thought. Andrea's gaze drifts, hinting at a memory fading.

PAPA
(Perplexed)
Where'd you go? Don't go through
the portal of your mind. All the
creatures, insects, tar monsters,
their in your head.

Papa snaps his fingers, pulling her back.

INT KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

Andrea (now 17) picks up a spoon with a steely resolve and brings it to his lips.

ANDREA
(Softly)
Sorry. I had to fight some
monsters.

PAPA
(Smiling gently)
It's all in your head, sweetheart.

ANDREA
(Reflective)
I've started to realize, Papa.

The sun streams through the window, illuminating the kitchen. It looks ordinary, but there's an undercurrent of tension. Andrea meticulously mixes something in a pot.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(sweetly)
I'm sorry for everything, Papa.

Papa enters, a hint of weariness in his eyes.

PAPA

The two of us can be better alone.

Andrea serves the soup, her expression masking the malicious intent beneath.

ANDREA

Here, try it!

Papa tastes the soup, and his face contorts in disgust.

PAPA

(spitting it out)

What the hell is this?

ANDREA

(forcing it closer)

You don't like it?

She shoves the spoon toward him relentlessly.

PAPA

(choking, panicked)

What are you doing?

Andrea lights a match, the flame dancing between them.

ANDREA

You're a ticking time bomb, Papa.

The tension snaps as the flames flicker dangerously close, the past colliding with the present.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The squad car drives down a dark, unlit street, the headlights piercing the gloom. Inside, Andrea leans against the window, lost in her thoughts.

ANDREA

(whispering to herself)

I'm Dark Jack. I'm Mama. I'm Papa.

INT. INCEPTION HEIGHTS REHAB CLINIC - NIGHT

Andrea is dragged down the sterile, white halls by LARGE SECURITY GUARDS. She glances at the closed doors, shadows lurking behind the glass. Her eyes narrow as she passes by a familiar room.

ANDREA
(softly)
Eric's room -

GUARD 1
(grunting)
The other one who escaped?

GUARD 2
He got shot on Philip's property.
That incident was kept quiet.

The guards exchange glances, unsure of her insights.

INT. INCEPTION HEIGHTS REHABILITATION CENTER - NIGHT

Andrea lies on a mattress in a padded room, staring at the white ceiling. Papa and Mama stand on either side, looking down at her with concern. Dark Jack hovers above, a dark, foreboding presence.

ANDREA
(defiant)
None of you are real.

Dark Jack smirks, his eyes glinting with mischief.

DARK JACK
If we weren't real, how could we
help you escape? You must get back
to Inception Heights immediately.

The room begins to spin as Andrea's mind races, caught between reality and her twisted fantasies.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END?